

James Acontius a Reuerend Diuine



364

SATAN'S STRATAGEMS,
OR THE
DEVILS
Cabinet-Council
DISCOVERED.

Whereby he endeavors to hinder the Knowledge
of the Truth, through many Delusions.

Wherein is laid open an easie way to end
Controversies in Matters of Conscience, by
setting down the right order of Disputation in
Points of Religion, that so Truth
may be known from Error.

Worthy to be perused by all Christians of
different Judgments, in this juncture of time.

Together with Arguments to each Book,
for the ease of the Reader.

By *Jacobus Acontius*, a Learned and
Godly Divine banished for the Gospel.

As also the Testimonies of some Ancient Divines,
Together with an Epistle written by Mr *John Goodwin*.
And Mr. *Durie*: Letter touching the same.

L O N D O N,
Printed by *John Macock*, and are to be sold by *G. Calvert*,
1648.

SATAY 2 STRAYAGEM?

OR THE

DEVILS

Cabinet-Council

DISCOVERED.

Whereby he endeavors to hinder the Knowledge
of the Truth, through many Delusions.

Wherein is laid open an easie way to end
Controversies in Matters of Conscience, by
setting down the right order of Disputation in
Points of Religion, that so Truth
may be known from Error.

Worthy to be perused by all Christians of
different Judgments, in this juncture of time.
Together with Arguments to each Book,
for the use of the Reader.

By Jacobus Acontius, a Learned and
Godly Divine banished for the Gospel.

As also the Testimonies of some Ancient Divines,
Together with an Epistle written by Mr. John Goodwin.
And Mr. Davis Letter touching the same.

L O N D O N,

Printed by John Mace, and are to be sold by G. Cuthbert,

1648.

sort of men now upon the stage, shall seem



Latin, and once in this Kingdom. This is the

To the Right Honorable
The Lords and Commons of England,
in the High Court of Parliament assembled.

His Discourse (Lords and Commons of England) deserves, and desires your perusal and Patronage: It deserves the former forasmuch as the wellbeing of the Common wealth, is therein much concerned, it desires the latter, as being like to meet with such measure as he meet with, who found cause to lay to the reverend and learned sons of Abraham, that said in Moses that he seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God. If it seem in some places knotty, be pleased to remember, the Author was an Italian, to which Nation, subtilty in reasoning, seems natural, and let the goodness of the Cause, excuse the hardness of the Skill. If any particular persons, or any

OT

(a 2)

sort

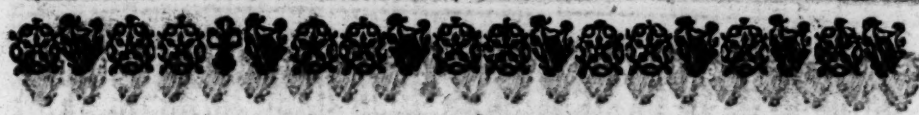
sort of men now upon the Stage, shall seem
to be pointed at herein, be pleased to take no-
tice, that it is now eighty four years since this
Treatise was penned. It hath been twice or
thrice Printed beyond the Seas in the Original
Latine, and once in this Kingdom. This is the
first time it hath endeavored to speak *English*. If
this *essay* shall finde acceptance, the Translator
intends to go in hand with the remaining
Books, God affording life and opportunity.
In the mean time and ever, his humble and
heartty suit, to the mighty Counsellor and Prince of
Peace, shall be, that he will be pleased by his
Spirit, to be present at all your Consultations,
and to grant, That forasmuch as you have hi-
therto prudently steered the Ship of the Com-
mon-wealth through tempestuous Seas, and
magnanimously defended the same against the
Assaults of many cunning, strong and furious
Pirates, You may not come to let her split upon
the shore, but that she may be by you safely
landed in the fair Haven of Righteousness and
Peace.

Your Honors humble servant,
in reference to the Publike,
The Translator

1611

(15)

To



To his Excellency
Sir Thomas Fairfax, Capt. General,
 And the Right Honorable
Oliver Cromwel, Lieut. General
 of all the Forces in ENGLAND,
 raised by Authority of Parliament,
 for defence of the Common-wealth.

Far renowned Commanders,

Considering the Honorable use which divine
 Providence hath made of your High Valor
 and Prudencies, in perserving the Liberties
 of this Nation; and how much it concerns
 the Common-wealth, that Personages of such eminency
 be rightly informed in Matters wherein the Common
 good is so highly interessed; The Translator of this
 Discourse thought it his duty, in reference to his end
 in this Work (which was onely common profit, and
 which he thought he might better advance by translat-
 ing an Excellent, then making a bad or mean Book) to
 present the same to your serious perusal; and withal, to
 testifie his thankfulness for some favors formerly re-
 ceived upon occasion of a particular address. This is
 all he hath to say, save, that he is

Your Excellencies and your Honors
 most humble servant, in reference
 to his Countreys good,
The Translator.

(a3)

T
 once

To the R^t Honorable John Warner,
Lord Mayor of the City of LONDON.

Right Honorable.

The benefit which the City of London, and consequently the Nation hath reaped, and is like yet farther to enjoy, by your Lordships prudent and well-tempered Government, hath encouraged the Translator of this profitable Discourse, to commend the same unto your Honors perusal; whereby your Lordship may be conformed in that same Christian Moderation which is so commended in you, and be directed how to steer your course, in respect of different opinions in points of Religion; so as may be most for the general good of the City, committed to your care, for your Lordships honor, with peace of conscience here, and the facilitating of your account at the day of Christ; which is the prayer of the Translator.

Your Honors most humble servant

in reference to the publick good

The Translator.

Your Excellencies and your Honors
most humble servant, in reference
to his Countreys good,

The Translator.

177

(11)

Or are such men like to prosper in their days?



TO THE
READER.

They that desire to have as good conductors of their souls as the



Amongst the many strains of that unreasonable-
bleness in men, which renders the days
we live in, so calamitous and sad, there is
scarce any more deplorable or comporting
with our misery, then for men to have
their mouths wide open in declaiming
against what they are pleased to call Errors
and Heresies, and their ears fast shut against
all Christian means and directions, either for

the discovery and eviction of them to be such, or for the sup-
pression of them, being so evicted. There is no question to be
made, that there are many vile imaginations of men, which
are against the knowledge of God, walking up and
down amongst us, which their fathers and friends have baptized
by the names of *New Lights*: On the other hand, as little questi-
on there is, but that there are many ancient Truths, also pleading
restitution after a long and injurious ejection, unto their native
Honours, which because they plead in *forma pauperis*, *Spem*
rum, cannot onely denied Christian audience to their Pleas, but
reproached also with the opprobrious terms of *Old accursed*
Error and *Heresy*. Now when men make no scruple or Con-
science to bind up God and *Belial*, Christ and the Devil toge-
ther in one, and the same bundle of condemnation, because they
are both alike troublesome and offensive unto them, do they not
provoke both the powers of *Heaven*, and the powers of *Hell*, at

The Epistle

once against them? Or are such men like to prosper in their days? In vain do they *blow a Trumpet to prepare* the Magistrate to battle against Errors and Heresies, whilst they leave the judgments and Consciences of men armed with confidence of Truth in them. If men would *call more for light, and less for fire from Heaven*, their warfare against such enemies would be much sooner accomplished. For he that denied the one, hath promised the other, (*Prov. 2. 3, 4, 5. Jam. 1. 5.*) And amongst all Weapons, there is none like unto light to fight against darkness. But whilst men arm themselves against Satan, with the material sword, they do but insure his victory and triumph.

They that desire to serve as good souldiers of Jesus Christ, against Errors and Heresies, must first conscientiously study the Christian Art, and Method of this Warfare; otherwise, they may easily build up what they go about to pull down, and make a *laams* expedition (yet upon worse terms) who was sent to cure and yet in conclusion, *blessed altogether*, *Numb. 24. 10.* It is hard to say, whether that hand which desires to be lifted up against Error and Heresie, with success, had more need of *firmness* or *strength*. Few mens Errors finde access to their judgments, but by the way of their affections,

*He that will the Judgment win,
With Affections must begin.*

Nor will it be easie for men to come at them to dethrone them, but by making their approaches the same way; I mean, by making friends of their affections, that they may not side with their judgments against them.

I have not met with any Author comparable to this now in thine hand, for a Christian genius and dexterity, in teaching that desirable and happy Art, as well of composing differences in matters of Judgment, as far as a compoſure in this kinde may with the honor of Truth be admitted; as of opposing that which is not meet to be admitted to composition. He intituleth his Book *Stratagemata Satanae*, Satans Stratagems: He might as properly with respect to the matter of it, have stiled it *Stratagemata Christi*, the Stratagems of Christ, inasmuch as the wisdom which is revealed from Heaven, for the countermaying of Satan in his attempts

attempts upon the precious souls of men by errors and heresies, is here drawn out in such happy directions and instructions for that purpose, that had they their weight and worth in practise and due obedience, the Kingdom of Error and Heresie would soon be shaken.

If any man list in this warfare, being of *Iehu's complexion*, cannot endure to march against his Enemy with a sober pace, and had rather be tossing *Firebals of Granado's*, then weilding the *Sword of the Spirit*; this Author is like to find final thanks from such a person; ten to one but he wil * *smite him with the tongue.* * *Ier. 8. 18*
To such an one I would make no other Answer, but that of the man that had been healed of blindness, to the Pharisees concerning our Lord; *Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind now I see.* Whereas I was ignorant in many things which it concerned me to know, about opposing Errors and Heresies, I now understand them.

Reader, though I am none of those that are facile * *to strike hands, or become surety for debt,* yet thus far I dare engage for the Treatise in thy hand, that if thou wilt diligently peruse it, it shal recompence thee with a better thing then *Repentance* for thy pains. The *Father of lights* and God of Truth according to the unsearchable riches of his Grace in Christ, *break up at last all the fountains of the great deep of Truth and open the windows of Heaven,* that *knowledg may fil the Earth as waters cover the Sea*; keep thee and me from the danger and defilement of Error and Heresie; and vouchsafe us the honor of being instruments in his hand, for the preservation of others also from the same misery.

* *Prov. 6. 22. 26.*

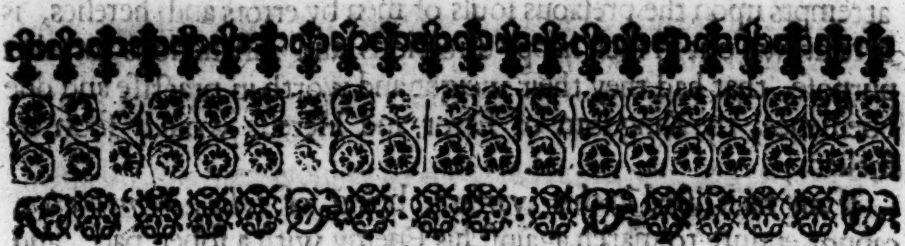
Thine, to serve thee in
the Faith and Love
of Jesus Christ.

From my Study
Colemanstreet,
LONDON,
Feb. 9. 1647.

J. GOODWIN.

A

The


 The Testimonies of the famously learned
Petrus Ramus, a French Protestant Martyr, slain in
 the Massacre of Paris for the witness of *Iesus*; and of *Nr*
Communis (a learned and godly German Writer, now
 living and of great fame for his labors in the Re-
 formation of Learning) concerning the
 Worth of our AUTHOR.

The name of *Jacobus Acontius*
 hath now of a long time been fame-
 ously known to the world by the excellent
 Monuments of his Wit.

I took great content to hear tel of the
 Humanity and Grace, together with
 the various and profound Arts of
Jacobus Acontius. *P. Ramus* in an E-
 pistle to our Author being in England,
 which is extant in a Collection of Epistles
 and Orations of *P. Ramus* & *Aud.*
Talæus in 8°.

Scripturientis

Scripturientis nostri ævi cacothæ of-
 fenſus Jacobus Acontius, Vir excellen-
 tiſſimus provideri poſſe optabat, &c.
 that is, Jacobus Acontius, a moſt excel-
 lent man, offended at the ſcribbling ſick-
 neſs of our Age, wiſhed that order might
 be taken, &c. Johan. And. Comine-
 nius in the Preface to his Idea or ſyn-
 tomie of Nat. Philoſophy, at the be-
 ginning.



The Teſtimony of certain moſt eminent
 French Divines concerning this Treatiſe.

With the reading of Acontius
 his Book of the Struggles
 of Satan, I was not only my ſelf exceed-
 ingly reſreſhed, but having commended
 the ſame to the reading of ſome of our

A 2

Divines

Divines of greatest Reputation and
Learning, they exceedingly appro-
ved both the modesty of the language
and the Prudence of the Discourse it
self. I am possessed with an earnest long-
ing to know and peruse all Acontius his
writings: Pet. Ramus in Epistola ante
citata.



The Testimony of certain most eminent
French Divines concerning this Treatise.



of Satan, I was not only myself exceed-
ingly refreshed, but having commended
the same to the reading of some of our
Divines

A

**Letter of the learned and judicious
Mr DURY (one of the Assembly of Mini-
sters) to Mr SAMUEL HARTLIB
touching the Author.**

Dear Friend,

I Am heartily glad that some body hath taken the pains to trans-
late into English *Acontii Stratagemata* in these times of
strife and confusion: The Author was an *excellent* man, and
thoroughly knowing in many Sciences; his *excellency* did lie in the
depth and solidity of his *judgment* in every thing; and in the
Piety and Moderation of his spirit in Matters of Religion. At
the breaking forth of the Gospel, when he did live, many that
were convicted of the errors of the Church of *Rome*, were stag-
gered at the Truth, and the profession thereof by the Reformed
Churches, because of the manifold disputes and the disorders
found amongst them, and ever since continued by the subtilty of
Satan, who not being able to hinder the breaking in of more
light, doth endeavor to make it either ineffectual or hurtful to the
salvation of mens souls. As it was then, so it is now, at every
Period of our *Reformation*; he doth make every Truth a Matter
of Strife; and what he cannot suppress by the power of igno-
rance, he endeavors to pervert by the evil use that men make of
knowledg, to disappoint them of the end for which God hath
given it. This wise man in his time did discover *Satans* aym, and
warned his Generation faithfully, and chiefly the *Watchmen*, of
the grand adversaries design against them: But how much this
Admonition is laid to heart, doth appear by the Distempers of

places, whereof both the Causes and Remedies are here discovered and offered to the Churches, but minded almost by none. However some there are, at all times, & will be, who will be affected herewith; and God is able by their means to qualifie the spirits of others, and to cast Satan under the feet of his Elect and Faithful servants, in his own time. Therefore it is very useful that such Testimonies as these should be extant; and now to us, they are very seasonable, although perhaps in haste we shal see no great fruit thereof. But our comfort is, that although *the Kingdom of Heaven is as a grain of mustard seed*, yet it groweth at last to be a *mighty great tree*, so that *the fowls of heaven lodg in the branches thereof*. Therefore we must not be we-ry in wel doing; for we are sure that in sowing this seed we shal not lose our labor; because

Gal. 6. 9. the promise is, that in due time we shal reap, if we faint not. To be carried along with the stream, or to be silent when matters are not carried according to our mind, is no hard matter to any that hath any measure of discretion; but to row against the stream, to labor against wind and tyde, and the whole current of an age, and that without offence unto any, and that strongly and irresistibly (as in his Age *Acontius* did) is not the work of an ordinary Courage; therefore such as own him in his way are the more to be commended. I shal therefore intreat you to remember my love and service to your friend who hath taken this profitable pains to translate this *excellent piece of Learning*, and thank him from me for it. I make no doubt but it will be convincing sufficiently to such as are free from *hardness of Heart* in the ways of factionousness; and are not blinded with *carnd ends*, in the prosecution of Religious Controversies.

The Grace of God be with you, and bless your Friends Endeavors. I rest,

Your Faithful Servant

From S. James's

Feb. 9. 1648.

in CHRIST;

John Dury.

The Authors Preface.

IF any man shall haply wonder at the rashness or foolishness of him, who hath hoped to accomplish so endless a work, as to collect and compile a writing the Stratagems of Satan, which is all one, as if he would undertake to drain the Ocean dry. I would have that man consider with himself a while, whether or no, by how much the Arts of this cunning old cheater, are more numerous, various and mysterious; we ought not to take the greater heed to save our selves from him? This I suppose he will confess: But how shall we take heed, if those Arts of Satan be unknown? Might we not justly fear, that there might be most danger, where we least suspected any? That where we did think to escape, there we should fall into some hidden snare? Which is too often seen in many persons, and they none of the simpler sort, but even the most eminent in the Church of God. Since then it lies in our hand to look to our selves, which we cannot do without this help, we are necessitated to try, if by any means we may attain the same, and so beg of God (to whom every thing is easie) to be our assistant herein. Whose help having frequently implored, we hope we have not lost our labour, but that all good men shall bless God with us, for putting this thought into our mind, and graciously prospering our endeavours. One thing there is, which of a long time, hath much afflicted my Spirit: for every man is sensible, how much the welfare of the Churches depends upon those that are of eminent authority, so that if they stand, all things cannot but go well; if they fall, every man almost will be overwhelmed in their ruin. It hence it is, that Satan aims chiefly, and almost solely at them, leaving nothing unattempted which may defile, marre and corrupt them. And in case he do not always loose his labour, but sometimes gains the victory over them, those Stratagems, whereby he doth it, cannot be laid open; but the failings of the vanquished must likewise be discovered, which discovery, how basefall

THE PREFACE.

nothing it is any man may easily conceive. For as any reprehension
 is ever displeasing to the nature of man: so is it then espe-
 cially distasteful, when it is unusual and beside expectation.
 Now what is there can be done more unwonted and less expected,
 then for a man to reprehend those whom all good men do admire
 and very much reverence; to whom it seems to appertain to pre-
 scribe Laws to others, rather then to have Laws set to them: to
 teach all men rather then to learn of any one? Yea, but (you
 wil say) such men wil be so far from taking any offence, that if you
 shal shew them any failings, out of their humanity and prudence
 they wil give you many thanks; indeed that is my hope. Yet is
 it a matter of greater moment then men are lightly aware of, to
 incur the ill-wil of persons of such authority and reputation. How-
 beit, I am much more troubled to consider the over eager inclina-
 tions of some men, who account such as they have once begun to
 admire, to be no longer men but gods, against whom, if a man
 speak but a word, he is looked upon as if he blasphemed God him-
 self. What should I do in this case? Should I, to avoid ill will,
 forbear to discover such snares, as Satan sets to catch men in,
 not only to their own, but the whole Church of God's ruine? What
 make this do in me, then to hold confederacy with Satan, and to
 conspire their destruction? I have shewed all the favor I could,
 which was, to use as much gentleness, as I could, possible: I have
 spared words names, and mentioned only the things themselves,
 wherein I perceived the snare of Satan to lie hid. Now, if so be
 any man shal interpret himself injured, by the reprehension of such
 things wherein he may be some ways concerned, let him but
 think with himself how justly and honestly he shal make any such
 interpretation. Verily, he may with as much reason, justify the
 complaints of Drunkards, Adulterers, Homicides, and all other
 flagitious persons, against those whose duty it is to inveigh against
 the bad manners and wickednesses of men; then which what could
 be more absurd? But (you maist say) What if those things thou
 speakst against, deserved not such a reproof? Surely, if
 any such thing be, when I shal know as much, I shal be very
 sorry for my oversight. For I am no such man as to
 think that I cannot err. Sure I am, it hath been none of mine in-
 tention, either openly or secretly, to provoke or offend any man. I take
 him

THE PREFACE

him to witness that knoweth all things: so that who ever be he, that hath any the least drop of Christian clemency, ought easily be moved to pardon me in such a case. Howbeit, just it is, that he that shal be touched by the things we handle, do not make himself judge, but refer the matter to the judgment of such, who are herein, in respect of their own particular, nothing concerned. And far better it is for us, amongst our selves, to note the slips one of another, and lovingly to labor for an amendment, then to wait till our Enemies shal thereby take occasion to rail against us and our profession with a venomous tongue. Let wilt the Papists, into whose hands this discourse shal come, laugh to see our wounds laid open. But, it is better they should laugh at our wounds, whiles in the mean time they are curable, then that we should suffer them, for want of medicines, to exulcerate and become incurable, and so make them laugh at our destruction. I would only say thus much to them, that when they have sufficiently lamented their own maladies, I wil give them free leave to recreate themselves with laughing at ours. Let them turn over the ancient histories, and see if the Church of God were ever in so good an estate, but that there were ther many things which might deserve the grief of every good man: and finding the condition of the Church to have been always such, what cause is there for them to wonder, if we are not in every part sound. But let them laugh, than list. Our endeavor should be, by removing all just cause of reprehension, not so much to suppress their laughter, as by all excellency of examples, to invite them, together with us, to come unto Christ. And that thou must not fear any sharpness of language in this Discourse, know, that we endeavor no other thing so much, in all this work of ours, as to reduce all those which handle any points in the Church, whether by word or writing, to the greatest mildness and gentleness that may be. How unseemly therefore, and how unjust a thing would it have been, if I had refused to be subject to that Exam which I had sent to others? How justly might that proverb be said in my dish, Physician heal thy self? But to come to the point. In this Treatise (Reader) we present thee with those Stragles whereby Satan hath labored to overthrow the Kingdom of Christ, and in such sort, as to render it, as it were, out of the world, that it might never be again repaired, and so to stop

THE PREFACE

a Kingdom of his own and to maintain the same, if not all of them (for that were an impossible thing) yet I am persuaded the most principal. And, that thou must wonder (that I say, or rejoice) take more, thou shalt find them marshalled in such order and method, that thou shalt find them to make a certain kind of Art. We have added cautions for the avoyding of them, and they are such as (if I am not mistaken) Whosoever shall not slight them, may have good ground to hope, that though Satan plow never so much, yet he shall but lose his labor. In some cases peradventure, when the caution seemed manifest enough of it self by the rule of contraries, we have forbore to put our selves to unnecessary labor. Some things indeed there are which for want of examples may seem somewhat obscure: Which examples were therefore omitted, because, such as we found ready to our hand, could not (as we conceived) be alledged without the offence of some men. Which thing (lest our labor might be fruitless to them ward) we were carefully to shun; in some cases we could not conveniently feign examples; in others, though we might have done it, yet we feared, lest they might occasion new contentions; which I wish we have not too much occasioned, notwithstanding all our care to the contrary. But if thou shalt read this Discourse frequently, and attentively, there wil be nothing, which thou shalt not at length understand, even without examples. Some wil wish that this Argument had been handled more largely, and that not without just cause; to such all that I shall answer in this, that I have done what the time would permit me; if I would have deferred the impresson, the Work might have appeared to the world, at least more polished and exact; but forasmuch as I conceived that it greatly concerned the common good of all Christians, that these Stratagems should see the light with all possible speed, I was willing rather to set at nought mine own reputation, then to defer the Edition the least moment. If the Lord shall afford me any leasure, I shall endeavor that they may hereafter come forth, more compleat and better adorned: In the mean time (gentle Reader) take in good part this abortive birth, and joyn thy godly prayers to mine, that the Lord would be pleased to furnish me with somewhat better and more profitable, then what, for the present, I am able to present.



Satans Stratagems:

The first Book.

The Argument.

THe end Satan aimes at in all his Stratagems. The Nature of Man since the fall, how fit for Satan to work upon. The ways and means Satan uses to attain his end. How true opinions concerning religion come to be changed into false. Deceitful and invalid Arguments, Passions and Affections of the mind, A good opinion of those that are erroneous, An evil opinion of those that hold the truth, lying signs and Wonders what force they have to change mens judgments from truth to Error. Satans devices to make disputes and debates, intended for the clearing of truth, to serve his own ends in the advancement of Error. Many prime persons, Pillars of the Church, whiles they Zealously as they think maintain the cause of Christ, do drive on and advance Satans designs. A passionate indiscreet opposition, a great encreaser of Sects. No unnecessary Controversy ought to be raised. An opinion ought not to be condemned for appearing new, but must be examined by the word. A very hard thing to embrace Truth when it hath the appearance of an Error. To reject what ever savours of Novelty, wil cause, that remaining errors shal never be purged out of the Church. How erroneous persons are to be prepared to receive a sight of their errors. What caution is to be used that we oppose not truth under the name of error. What ought to be accounted knowledg, what opinion. What Man is most like to

B

finde

find the Truth. Most men suppose they are led by the Word and Spirit to think as they do in matters of Religion, Whiles their Judgments are biased by Antiquity, estimation of mens learning, Multitudes of those that judg so or so &c. He that would have his Judgment swayed by Gods Spirit, must pray earnestly for the Spirit, and cast out of his consideration whatsoever is not of God nor his Word, as if there were no such thing in the world. He that hath attained to a clear and perfect knowledge, cannot suspect himself of error in that point. Before a man oppose a tenet as erroneous and impious, he ought seriously to consider, What assurance he hath of the error and impiety of the said point. A man may pray long for the knowledge of the Truth before the Wisdom of God may think fit to discover the same unto him. God is free to discover the truth to a man when and by whom he pleases, yea by him whom he opposes as a seducer. In controversies of religion Sathan can play the part both of opponent and defendant in respect of one and the same tenet. We must first hear and examine a point before we condemn it, and never say it is an old Error and hath bin oft confuted, for it may have bin an old truth ill defended. Controversies soon raised, hardly laid. Before we oppose an error we must consider of what moment it is. Vain questions and tenets not to be confuted, but avoided. Satan labours to perswade a man, that every opinion he takes up, is a most serious and weighty point, without the knowledge whereof there can be no salvation. Rules to distinguish curious unprofitable questions that are to be avoided, from sober, serious, and profitable ones that ought to be handled. The End of all Christian Doctrine. What ever is profitable to that end is useful to be known. An enumeration of useful Doctrines. A Doctrine that reaches no further then speculation, is vaine. Every Doctrine that any ways makes for the attainment of the aforesaid end, is not of such moment, as that a controversie should be raised therabout, forasmuch as some other Doctrines unquestioned may perform the same service. Passion in the Persons dissenting makes a point in controversie seem far weightier then in truth it is, which may be seen in the eager bickering of the Ancient Christians about Easter day and other matters of smal moment. The right way to bring men from vain and unprofitable questions. What Ministers, Professors in Universities, Writers of books ought to do to that end. To stand long up-

pon and to affect to make many Sermons upon one text, a great occasion of starting curious and unprofitable questions. Large Commentaries guilty in the like kind.

L I B. I.



He best way to find out the diuels Stratagems, is to take into serious consideration, what the end is at which all his consultations aime, which is not Very hard to tel. For, seeing that he is defined in Scripture A MAN-SLAYER from the very BEGINNING, what can we think he should rather aime at then the DEATH of *MAN* and that *ETERNAL*. Being therefore as the oldest so the craftiest fox in the world, wee may assure our selves that nothing can escape his indevours which may prove pernicious to mankind to be put upon; and as certain it is that he endeavours to divert them from, whatsoever may prove conducive to their Salvation. Now the Salvation of Man consists in obeying God, as his death and misery in disobedience. *Wouldst thou obtain life* (said our Lord) *keep the Commandments* (by Commandements or Law in this place we understand, whatsoever we are commanded not only to do or not to do, but to beleive) whence it follows that the *MAN-KILLERS* grand design is to keep us from obeying the commands of God. Now the Commands of God may be violated as soon by those that know them not as by those that know them, for though he be much the greater delinquent who disobeys that command of God known, then he that through ignorance transgresseth; yet shal not ignorance make any one guiltless, for it is almost impossible that any one should be ignorant without his own fault. Howsoever, certain it is, the ignorance of Gods Law and the violation thereof are so nearly allyed, that the one is mutually the others cause. By not knowing the mind of God, thou doest that which moves his anger oft times when thou thinkest highly to please him, for which cause amongst the rest, thou art deprived of all light of sound judgment,

and dayly overwhelmed with more gross and palpable darkness. If thou knowest his law and doest not obey it, it wil by the just judgment of God come to pass, that thou shalt fall from the knowledg thereof and slip into some great errors.

This then being the end of all *Sathans* Counsels, forasimuch as it is MAN-KIND he labours to undoe; that we way more easily understand his deceits, let us diligently consider the nature of *MAN*. Though *MAN* at the first was created of a good, right and every ways perfect Nature and disposition, yet breaking the command of God, he became of another NATURE quite contrary, exceedingly corrupt and lyable to all manner of vice: Hence it is, that (1) he loves himself immeasurably, but with a kind of blind and intemperate affection, wherewith being led, he loaths his true good, and seeks his own hurt and dammage. (2) As our first Parents credited the *Serpent* when he said, as soon as ye shal taste the fruit ye shal be as it were Gods knowing good and evil; so hath there ever since stuck such a perswasion in Mankind, that every man takes himself to be a kind of Diety. which disposition upon the least occasion, presently discovers it self. For as soon as he is a little advanced in dignity, or hath but scraped together some considerable heap of Earth, he judges every body bound to give him all the respect that may be, yea to seek his commodity with their own loss. If he get a little Learning, presently he imagins *he* knows all things, and *he* alone; so that the whole world ought to be governed by *his* wisdom, leaving nothing undone which may beget such an opinion of him, not knowing or little caring how unjust he is in so doing. (3) He is wonderfully addicted to bodily pleasures and exceeding intemperate in the use of such things as are thereunto conducing. (4) He loves this life and thereabout spends all his thoughts, not so much as thinking of the life to come. He dreams this life wil last for ever, and though he see daily millions of men fall before his eyes, he cannot be brought seriously to be perswaded, that himself came into the world upon like terms of mortality. (5) And since he sees that riches wil furnish him with what ever he desires, and while they do so they must needs wast, and that an infinite quantity is requisite towards the expence of an endless life, hence it is that he hath an insatiable desire to gather wealth. Some such conceit it was together with a strange weak-

weakness of mind, that made the Sovereignty of the whole world seem too too little for *Alexander* the great. (6) In reference to the knowledge of God and his wil, of his own proper good and evil, which consists wholly in the favour or offence of God, he is altogether blind, thinking himself in the mean time as quick-sighted as an *Eagle*. To give assent unto truths of this nature, and to reject the contrary errors is as repugnant to his disposition, as it is for heavy things to fall Heaven-ward. Not that he hates truth as truth, or is delighted with lies as lies, but because of the corruption of his Judgment in things of this nature taking truth for falsehood, and falsehood for truth it self. (7) And look how he himself is disposed, though he perceive it not, so he imagins the blessed God to be, worshipping him accordingly with Gold, Silver, Precious stones and Jewels; with great, costly and magnificent buildings, yea and sometimes with such things, as should one man honour another with, it would be interpreted a great reproach and mockery. He wil needs have him to be a visible God, and therefore paints him and shapes him out according to his own fancy. He cannot in good earnest perswade himself that God knows, cares for, or moderates the affairs of mankind, that he wil give rewards or inflict punishments: whence it is, that neither by pious affection to God, nor through fear or punishment, can he be drawn to forbear such practices, as are declared offensive to him. (8) Each mans sight failes him when he should see these faults in himself, but he needs no spectacles to spie them in another. Other mens doings he is apt to misconstrue, being exceeding suspitious; yet if a man once begin to think highly of, and attribute much to another man (especially in matters of religion) therein he wil over-shoot all bounds of reason, and make that man a kind of a God. Otherways he wishes wel to none but himself, and would have no body else excel in glory. Whereupon if any profit or praise accrue to another, he becomes envious and hinders what he can the increase thereof. He diminishes the praises and augments the failings of another, using calumniation. (9) If in any matter he be never so little opposed he is exceeding prone to wrath and hatred, neither can he easily remit his stomach, but rather whets himself more and more to blood, slaughter and all kinds of cruel revenge. Thus is man of his own nature above measure arrogant, high-conceited, intemperate, covetous,

unsatiable, desirous of what is another mans, a supplanter, lyer, contentious, envious, revengeful, murderous, blind, rash, obstinate, ungodly, and born to all mischeif. In a word, the nature of man; such as now it is, is not much unlike the Nature of the unclean Spirits. True it is, notwithstanding, that such vices as we have or might have named, do not all alike appear in all men, but some shew themselves more in some men then in others, and some are not at all seen in some men, by reason they want means or opportunity to practise them. Constitution of body, education, custome, study, and such like are of great moment, both to render a man prone unto, and to withdraw him from vices, yet is there not any man in whom the seeds of all vices are not found. Howbeit there are yet remaining in man some foot-steps and prints of his first nature, as a kind of obscure knowledg of what is just and unjust, honest and dishonest, that good deeds deserve praise, and ill deeds punishment. He seems to have a natural desire of knowledg and understanding. He has in him a certain kind of ability, from things, perceived by the sense to arrive to the knowledg of insensible things and so to raise himself to a certain kind of knowledg of the divine Nature it self. He hath some suspicion that there shal be a life after this, which shal ever last, attended with happines to the good, with misery and torments to the wicked. This is manifest by the Poets fables, whose discourses being accommodated to the opinions of the People, make frequent mention of such things. With this slight opinion of another life goes hand in hand some little desire of Salvation, wherewith provoked he enquires after the means of worshipping and procuring the favour of God. But the truth is, these remainders of mans pristine goodness, are kept under by so great and manifold oppositions of depraved nature, that in most men they wholly vanish and come to nought, and though in some they strongly resist the corruption of nature, as may be seen in *Socrates*, *Seneca* and others, yet in their strength never so great, as without the assistance of God to be of any moment to procure Salvation. Rather by the event it appears, Man is thereby led into greater darkness. Now this is that which vexes *Sathan*, that God of his infinite goodness bearing an extraordinary affection to mankind, chuses himself out of Mankind servants, ever and anon, on whom he bestows the knowledg of his Law, and whom he sends

to instruct the Nations of the world.

Mans Nature, then being such as we have shewn, and the End of all *Sathans* consultations discovered, the next thing we have to consider, is by what way he seeks to attain unto this end. Two conditions there are, in the one of which the people are always found, in the Light of truth, or in the Dark of errors and Ignorance. Neither is there ever so much light, but that some mists of ignorance remain (which we thought necessary to give warning of, least in speaking of that lightful condition of men, and making mention of error, we might be thought to handle things out of their place) Now when the people enjoy the Light of Truth, *Sathan* endeavours to overwhelm them with darkness; if they be already in the darkness of Error, his scope is that that darkness may for ever remain. Now a man may walk in the darkness of ignorance, either exercising no Religion, or a corrupt and false one. Again, a man may be without Religion, either having never heard of such a thing as we call Religion, and never having once thought of such a thing; or understanding the notion, but denying that there is any such matter, as do those monsters of men, who either deny that there is a God, or that he cares for the affairs of Mankind, Yet that there should be any Nation so brutish, as not to think of God, seems incredible; but that there is never wanting a parcel of desperate fellows, that perswade themselves it is a vain and silly thing to think of God, is more manifest then to need any proof, these are the Devils drudges he makes use of for the accomplishment of any, the most abominable wickednesses.

After that the true Religion hath been extant in a Nation, to the end that Nation fall therefrom into Errors, it is necessary their judgments alter. Now this change is either observed by the people, or not observed. If they observe it, there must needs be some cause, why they should leave that Doctrine they had approved, to embrace some other false and impious. Now the causes that true opinions in matter of Religion are changed for false, are false arguments, passions and affections of mind, such as are *desire*, *wrath*, *hatred*; a good opinion of such as err, a bad opinion of such as teach the truth, and lying signs or wonders. False arguments we account such, from which untruth is any way inferred, which may come to pass divers ways. For either all that is alledged is false,

as

as in this inference: the Mass ought to be retained, because the Church of *Rome* hath used it ever since the times of the *Apostles*, and what ever hath bin of ancient use in the Church of *Rome*, ought to be retained: or that which is alledged is in part true, and partly false: as in this inference, because the *Apostles* ordinances are to be practised [which is true] and confession of a mans sins in the ears of a Priest is an ordinance of the *Apostles* institution [which is false] therefore this custom of confessing sinns in the Priests care, ought to be retained. Again, all that is brought for proof may be true, and yet nothing to the purpose; as if a man should say, we are bound to observe difference of meats according to the prescriptions of the Church of *Rome*, because fishes, herbs, Roots, and the like do nourish less then flesh and eggs. Or lastly, the arguments may be such, as may seem to prove much, when indeed they prove just nothing, such as the Arguments of Sophisters use to be. As if a man should thus reason, No Christian man ought to marry a Christian woman, because every Christian woman is his sister, and for a man to marry his sister, is utterly unlawful. Now the motions of mens minds, which give occasion to change true opinions into false are divers; whereof some are referred to the teachers of truth, some to the teachers of error, and the rest to the Doctrine it self, whether true or false. The doctrine of truth is apt to be hated, because it accuses a man, forbids him such things as he is delighted with, and commands such things as he must do against his wil. Now that doctrine which a man hates he wil easily forsake. Contrarily, men are apt to love false doctrine, because it gives reyns to their sinful pleasures. It begets an ill opinion of the professors of the truth, when they appear to give little credit to what themselves teach, which comes to pass, when their life opposes their Doctrine, and they seem to be acted rather by their own commodity and false interests, then any love to Religion it self. Likewise the teachers of truth loose their credit, when God seems not to like of their doctrine by loading them with calamities and afflictions, but this is only with such as estimate things rather by their own natural judgment, then the rule of Gods Word. The Contrary to these, beget a good opinion of erroneous teachers. As for false signs they are such as are either reported falsly, or being the contrivances and jugglings of men or divels, are thought to be wrought by God himself.

Furthermore

Furthermore such considerations as make men alter their opinions, must either come into mens minds of their own accord, or there must be some few seducers which propound them to the rest, as it usually falls out; otherwise impossible it is any notable change should happen. Now seducers do either teach openly against the doctrine received, or privately; with, or without any opposition. But that any should be able publicly to contradict the doctrine received, without any resistance, it is requisite that there be no difference of wits among the people, which is impossible. And if so be that those which oppose such a teacher prove more potent then the favourers, they will be an hindrance to the seducer. Neither is it to be doubted, but that, when as the true worship of God is amongst a People, if any one shall spread false tenets, there will be more opposers then favourers; unless haply the whole multitude be very ill-affected, and the seducer use much cunning to that effect, as if he shall first gain a great opinion of his own wisdom or holiness, or shall abuse the Authority of such as are so accounted of, which was the practise of those of old, who brought unto the Churches letters pretended to be sent by the Apostles, or thrust upon them other writings with lying titles, and by such impostures seduced the simple. Of this sort was the Gospel of *Nicodemus*, the Travels of *S. Peter* and the like. Not were whole books alone fathered upon those that had no hand in them; but many were occasioned to complain, that their own proper writings were depraved. So among the writings of *Augustine*, and many famous men besides, many bastard tracts are foisted in, and many places of their own works are corrupted. Yea such was the impudence of some, that even whilst the Authors were living, they inserted into their works, such tenents as themselves would have to be believed, which was *Origens* Lot, as himself complains. Otherwise, it appears not how errors can be spread abroad at first, save among a few, and that privately. And though some seducer may privily turn away a few from the Doctrine received, yet can he not so do by many without being discovered; whence it comes to pass that a sensible mutation cannot be made without Controversies. Now they that oppose a seducer, do it either by Reason or by Authority; by Reason, when a man by word of mouth or writing, maintains the doctrine received, and refutes the new;

C

using

using to that end either arguments or testimonies; by Authority, when those that are the overseers of the Churches, or the Churches themselves, do by common vote condemn that same new doctrine as impious and repugnant to the word of God, and when the Magistrate shal under penalty forbid the same to be taught or maintained.

Now look as if seducers be in a right way resisted, all the Counsels of *Sathan* are frustrate; so most like it is that hereabout *Sathan* imploies all his crafts, and makes use of his utmost subtilty, to cause, that whatsoever shal be done by way of opposition, shal not only not hinder his designs, but help forward and promote them exceedingly. Wherefore it wil be labour wel bestowed, to understand by what stratagems he endeavours to bring this to pass. First, therefore in regard of Reason which uses to be opposed to seducers, by way of disputation, either face to face, or by writing; certain it is, that such reasoning is then of force to resist the false doctrine, when it doth aptly lay open both the weakness of those foundations upon which it is built, and the strength of the grounds which uphold the Doctrine received: as also when those who are dealt with, shal with a quiet mind and uncorrupted judgment diligently weigh the same. Unless, therefore the Reasons be such as we have said, and the speech of the Arguers shal have power to reduce the adversaries to that same tranquillity of mind, and soundness (that I may so speak) of judgment aforesaid; if it be such as shal rather work the contrary effects; so far shal such reasoning prove from resisting, that it wil in a wonderful manner favour the designs of *Sathan*. Now to weigh and measure out, what kind of reasoning is suitable to the adversaries genius and judgment, and what not, no man is able, unless he himself have his mind composed and serene, remembring withal, that he is bound and that withal diligence to make such enquiry. Since therefore it is requisite to this purpose that the opponent be calm and composed in his spirit, we must not omit to shew what things they be that use to trouble the mind of such an one. And for the most part, he wil be in a passion, if it stand with his private interest, that there be no change made in the doctrine received, which is true concerning all that execute the office of Teachers. For a change of Doctrine cannot be effected, but their dignity and estimation

mation must suffer an eclipse, as though they had taught falsities, yea and their profit will be much impaired. Against his love to his own doctrine will make him scarce of ability patiently to endure a contradictor; and look how likeness of manners, studies, opinions prevail much to beget love, so all dissimilitude is apt to procure hatred. To all which if reproaches and accusations from the Adversary shall be added, of necessity the minds of the opponents will be moved much more.

Neither shalt thou be ever able to any purpose to weaken a false assertion, unless thou first understand what it is; now he that does not with attention and patience listen, that does not suspend his judgment til the defendant have finished his discourse, cannot sufficiently understand what it is which he affirms, but whilst at every word spoke, he will be divining at the others meaning, and suffers his judgment to out-run his adversaries words, he shall not confute his arguments, but those which by his own rashness and false interpretation he hath feigned to himself. And these miscarriages then fall out when we hate our adversary and when we contempt him especially. Now the principal and almost only cause of contempt is when we take too much delight in our own abilities, and arrogate unto our selves, a greater share of science or judgment then is fit. And if there be any vice unto which a man is naturally inclined, it is arrogance, which gathers strength and growth by divers means. As first, if many men have a very great opinion of any one, and few there be that think otherwise of him, and they of very mean account. Of kin hereunto is, when a man conceits himself to have given some great and certain proof of his own wisdom and judgment, which thing befalls them who always or very often have appeared conquerors in disputation, and who frequently speaking in publique before the people, seldom or never meet with any that do contradict them; for unless such men watch themselves with a great deal of prudence, it can hardly come to pass but that they will think themselves to be the only wise men, and slight, and set at nought all others in comparison. That Proverb is sufficiently known, *Obsequium amicos, veritas adium peris*, Flattery gains friends, Truth makes foes: whence it comes to pass that those whose condition is such, that they seem able to do a man good or hurt, to procure his commoditie or hinderance,

his honor or disgrace, scarce any body wil contradict such men, rather multitudes wil flatter them. Neither would I have thee think (reader) that it is necessary that thou become the Pope of *Rome*, that thou must be flattered. For in as much as now a days not very many study Religion, having such as have resolved to become Church-men, more mindful of their belly for the most part then any thing else; those men by whose vote or recommendation, Church-employments are obtained (*viz.* the Ministers of every Parish of most note) though otherwise they are of no great wealth, yet shal you see them no less clawed and flattered by most men; then if they were to deal with that Idol of *Rome*, gaping after the fattest Benefices. What think you they would do, if some great revenues were joyned with the power, such men have to preferre to livings or places in the Church. Neither is it a light matter, that (as now the case stands in many places) every mans life and reputation, lies open to the lash of those they call Preachers; so that if a man displease them, and so come under their censure, he shal quite lose his credit: whence it is that every man had rather have them his friends then his Enemies, and scarce shal you find any one that wil oppose them, unless by some very urgent occasion thereunto induced. To all which occasions, if any considerable learning be concurring, which of it self alone, as *Paul* testifies, though not by its own fault (for it is a great gift of God) but through the corruptness of mans nature, is wont to puff a man up; without doubt Arrogance and Insolence wil be very much augmented. Whereupon, if such a man as one of these, shal be set to oppose a seducer, unless he warily consider with himself, what operations, Authority, Learning, Wealth (if he be rich) and reputation use to have, it wil be little less then a miracle, if he behave not himself insolently and arrogantly, charging his adversary with what ever shal come to his tongues end, and yet exceedingly taken with his own discourse, so that he alone must speak, oft times triumphing before he hath gotten the victory, whence it may fall out that a good cause having got a bad champion, shal lose somewhat of its reputation. Yea and we find by experience, that when a man is certainly perswaded of a thing, and hath reason so to think, he cannot but stand as it were in admiration, that there should be any one that cannot see what he sees, whereupon

unless

unless as soon as he hath in a word hinted his reason, his oppositor grants him his saying; as though it were manifest that he refused out of perverseness and obstinacy, he grows all in a choler; and then to one if he come not to reproach and railing. Now for as much as a mind moved and disturbed with passion can neither understand nor rightly judge of what is said; if the *erroneous person*, even and besides the weak, unfit confutation of his *Error*, shall have his mind disturbed with evil language (which is frequently done by those that find themselves to have the advantage of the ground) much less will he be able to acknowledg his *Error*. Such also is the disposition of man, naturally prone to pride and over great haughtiness of mind, that, if it were possible, he would be thought in every thing to go beyond others. So that much against his wil it is to give the preeminence to any, or to confess his failings, & look what thing a man hath least mind to do, it will be most difficult to make him understand that it is his duty to do the same. This may be seen in those that go to law about any matter, how hard a thing is it to persuade him that makes an unjust claim to what is not his own, or that will not part with what is another mans, that he deals unjustly? And look how much greater the heat of his mind is grown by contending, by so much the more hard it will be to make him give place to reason and equity. So that if so be, over and besides that thou shalt wisely and darkly lay open and prove his *error* to the *person erring*, that thou shalt disturb his mind by cutting language, this inconvenience shall be added, namely, that thou shalt unseasonably aggravate the greatness and foulness of his *Error*, wondering that any man could ever be so blockish and sottish as to be so foully overthrown, with such like expressions; by thus doing thou shalt deprive him of the remainder of his judgment and make him stark mad. So that he shall be able to do nothing less then so much as suspect, much less acknowledg and confess his *Error*.

If therefore such things as these shall be allowed in our debates, that, he which being in an *Error* himself hath seduced others, shall not have his *Error* clearly demonstrated unto him; he which takes upon him to oppose shall not understand what the seducer affirms and so shall not refuse it, but what himself by a false suspicion hath imagined, and shall defend the doctrine received not with such reasons as he ought to do, but with such silly ones as rashness and a mind madded with anger could collect, which may

be easily refuted; and the *erroneous person* that have cause to think himself not vanquished, but with many and grievous injuries after an insolent manner abused: such disputes, however they may seem intended to resist the Devil, yet are they so far from frustrating any of his plots, as that nothing could be invented more expedient to promote his designs. For they do not fight against *Errors* but make them invincible; they do not pluck them up but spread them abroad; they do not destroy, but propagate them, and that in a wonderful manner. They render *Errors* invincible, because when the person *erring* finds it easie to avoyd the dint of such arguments as are brought to oppose him, it gives him great occasion to think that there cannot any thing more strong be objected against him; and when he shal see confuted, not his own reasons, but I know not what other arguments, such as he never so much as once thought of, he may very wel think the cause to be, that not having any thing they could oppose against his arguments, and yet desirous to seem to have answered them, they have cavilled at and mis-interpreted his words. Hereupon he is altogether compelled to conclude with himself, that not he, but his opposites are in the *Error*. And if there be joynd sharp, insolent, and injurious language, yes and, it may be, threats too and such like, what can he do other but strongly perswade himself that his adversaries being unable to defend their cause by dint of Argument, have guarded and fortified themselves merely with force and insolence. And since hatred is bred of injuries, what is there that can settle *Errors* with greater pertinacy? And when a man shal leave his posterity, heirs both of his *Errors* and his *Hate*; it comes to pass that they can never be rooted up out of the minds of men. Thus is the people divided into Sects which hate one another with deadly feud, abstaining from no kind of injuries, and taking the more liberty unto themselves in this kind, in that men do not observe how in so doing they obey their own passions, but think they very much please God; whereas, in the mean time, by this means they incur the wrath of God daily more and more, and become enveloped with thicker clouds of darkness. Such disputes do spread *Errors* abroad, because the clamours there made, the brawls thence arising afford much occasion of discourse to many people; and according to the diversity of mens minds and Judgements

matters are very variously both reported and refuted. And it is wont to fall out, that if many dislike the Error, yet some wil approve of it, yea and some wil as much disapprove of the means used to resist the Error, viz. insolence, reproaches and the like, as of the Error it self, and wil thereupon begin less to like of those that set themselves to oppose the Error, whence it may come to pass that they may the more easily admit some other Error afterwards. He that likes the Error, can hardly refrain in his narrations to favour that part he approves, so as to add, leave out, change many passages at his pleasure, and thus by a kind of Corruption the evil is spread far and near. In a word, by controversies ill managed, errors are propagated and bred divers ways. For first, he that opposes himself against an Error, can hardly avoid but that he himself shal fall into some Error, either because (as the Proverb speaks) while he shuns *Charybdis*, he slips into *Scylla*, ignorant to keep the mean, as that man should do, who in opposing those that attribute all to the Word of God, and the reading thereof, not marking the necessity of the Spirit of God to be their guide and interpreter, to the right understanding; should endeavour to reduce the minds of such men to the meer inspirations of the holy Ghost; whereas the spirit is so far to be looked at, as that the written word be not contemned and lose its dignity, as if it were a matter of humane invention, and not of divine tradition; or because he wil grant somewhat to the Adversary not to be granted, which some of the ancient Fathers peradventure did, who in such a manner resisted the *Philosophers*, as that they defiled the purity of Christian tenets, with Philosophical ratiocinations. Likewise it may fall out, that whiles thou thinkest to express that Doctrine which thou holdest for truth, with more significant and clear expressions, then it is in Scripture expressed, and better to shun occasion of cavil (for the wit of man wil ever be more wary and wiser then God) thou wilt use such words or forms of expression, as from whence another less true and godly tenet may sometimes be collected. Furthermore, whereas on both sides they are wont to produce many allegations, each for his own judgment as the case requires; if it fall out that striving shal sharpen and inflame their minds, you shal soon see on both sides many matters affirmed and denied, which in a calmer mood they would never have affirmed or denied;

Hensied; last he Pott spake, *Forerunners* ministrat, Rage weapons
 doth afford. Every dart accidentally offered is caught hold on; fury
 suffers not a man to mark what an orle it is: and what ever hath
 rashly seap't a man, especially in the interim of the dispute, Pride
 will have it ratified and firm: and thereupon new controversies a-
 rise, and new errors in like manner without end. Yea it is seen
 that by disputes both the matters themselves, and mens wits are
 confounded, truth is lost, and many are brought to that pass, as
 to perswade themselves that nothing can be certainly concluded,
 and so to cast away all care of Religion. Yea and it seems impossi-
 ble to fall out, but that whiles men are perpetually wrangling a-
 bout some one point of Religion, they wil slight and forget many o-
 thers, and they perhaps of the chiefest note; and it wil grow to a cu-
 stom, that a godly man shal be distinguished from an ungodly by
 this one thing (be his life what it wil) in that he seems to abhor,
 and exceedingly loath that Doctrine, which in some one or two
 points is accounted heretical. O that we could but see at one
 view, how many and how great *overthrows* Sathan hath given to
 the Kingdom of Christ, what desolations he hath made by this one
 weapon of *Controversies*; he must be a man of iron that could
 chuse to weep. Nor do I now complain of those fanatical spirits,
 the emissaries of *Sathan*, who never cease sowing curious, vaine,
 and impious controversies: (for from them, what other could a
 man expect) but of those rather, who being such as love the true
 worship of God, deal unadvisedly in point of Controversie, and
 never observe how through a certain care of Gods glory, and the
 preservation of sound Doctrine, though very rash and headlong,
 they do many things, whereby whiles they think they do bravely
 advance the cause of Christ, they so far notwithstanding do the
 work of the Divil, as that he can hardly tel what to desire more.
 Neither do I speak verily of a sort of common unexperient'd pa-
 stors, but of some prime ones, the pillars of the Church, and they
 not only of this present age but of all, the Prophets and Apostles
 excepted. For I desire to take leave sometime to bewaile the
 Churches condition, and to bestow my teares upon the common ca-
 lamities. Hee that shares not in this fault, let him know wee meddle
 not with him in this place, we accuse none by name; yea and who-
 ever they be that are thus faulty, whatsoever we say, therefore we
 say

lay it, not to inveigh against them or to cause them to be censured; but that we might take away that corruption from out the Church, then which there cannot be a more deadly plague. We have not here denounced war against the persons of men whom we desire to be both saved and as much as may be honored, but against *Satan*. We prosecute only the things themselves (as we have said) which cannot be let alone without the certain ruin of the *Church*. Now if any shal suppose that this cannot be done, but they must be pointed at, as it were, with the finger; I would fain know of such men, whether of the two be more jult and fitting, for me to regard their credit and estimation or the common good and preservation of the Church: without all question if they be such indeed, as they would be taken for, lovers of God and of his honor, they wil not only take in good part this service of ours, but also render great thanks to God, that by some one at length (whoever he be) he hath manifested, that those counsels are not from him, which they would have judged so exceeding necessary for the *Churches* welfare. But if they be such (which I in no wise suspect) as esteem of their own dignity above all things else, it could not stand with my duty to prefer their reputation before the honor of God and the safety and good estate of the Commonwealth. Neither verily was there any cause for me to prize their favor and good wil above the favor of God himself. O the sottishness and stupidity of man! The Gospel had gotten possession of the whole world almost; so many contentions arose, so many strifes, so many brawls concerning the punctilio's of Religion and matters for the most part of smal moment, that by little and little it hath been almost lost, only a certain few remainders were in a corner with much difficulty reserved. In our Age likewise, by the incredible goodness of God, some light arose upon us: What do we? Frighted by the example of our Ancestors do we diligently inquire how it came to pass, that the professors of *Christianity* were first torn into *Sects*, then lost both all regulation of manners and their pious holy doctrine together, so that the most part of them retained not so much as the name of the Gospel? O unheard of sluggishness never to be enough lamented with tears of sorrow! As if we had no example whereby to beware, we go on with our eyes shut in the very same steps to overthrow all. Neither do we slip any practice whereby we may

D

make

make greater desolation then ever. How many sects arose there of old, and grew to a vast greatness, at whose beginning, if the Controversies had bin managed with some mildness and gentleness, with patience, modesty, and Peacefulness, we should never have heard of so much as their very names? But we, as soon as any one seems to set his foot beside the Path, we think there is no other course to be taken, but straightway to sound a defiance, to fill the world with railings, reproaches, clamours; what ever comes to our tongues end, that we deem most fit to resist the *Error*, whereas oft times nothing can be less to the purpose: likewise men of *Goatham*, we bring oyl to quench the fire. Whereas now or never, when we stand most in need of sober advisement, let us abandon wrath, away with *Arrogance*, away with *clamours*, and let Reason alone bear sway in this business, neither let *Satan*, but the spirit of God guide our Reason.

And in the first place let us beware again and again, that no unnecessary *Controversie* be raised. What if somewhat offend thine eare as strange and uncouth? The apprehension of thine own abilities, must it presently set thee a work to oppose it? An unfitting Master, by whose perswasion and the Divels instigation upon every the least occasion, thou shouldst rashly turn al toples turvie. I tel thee it is a smal matter, it's a dangerous business, there is more need of Council then temerity in such a case. For what if so be, that which thou hast heard, have some appearance of novelty, when as there is indeed no such matter, because thou *interpretedst* the words of him that spake it, different from his meaning? What a madness then would it be, when there is agreement in the things themselves, to make contentions about words, and to play at fifty-cuffs with the Clouds. If thou hadst but gone to the man, and ask't him friendly and courteously what was his meaning, he explaining his own words, all occasion of *Controversie* had bin taken away. Yea if so be there be somewhat which is indeed new, it is not presently the most advised course, to give eare to that same crafty sower of contentions, sounding to battle; but since as we have said, a people is never in so great light, but that there are some mists of darkness, we must first diligently examine, whether it agree with that Doctrine which is comprehended in the *Scriptures*, least it should fall out, that whiles we shal think to resist an *Error*, we become resisters of

of the truth. Now there is no man but wil willingly confess, that the truth ought never to be opposed, whatsoever shew of Error it may seem to have, howbeit to avoid so doing when occasion shall require is the hardest thing in the world. For whatsoever Doctrine any man hath once drunk down, he cannot perswade himself that it is untrue, but that what ever differs therefrom is false, and such as he is bound to oppose that it may not be beleaved. Now if all men shall be thus disposed, as to reject what ever favors of novelty, whatsoever Error shall be in the Church, it can by no means be extirpated, but rather, out of that one, many wil by little and little sprout forth. What is there then to be done? Certainly this is undeniable, that if they which erre were so affected, that they would patiently with quiet and composed minds hear such as differ from them, and diligently examine the force of their Reasons, as those that (whatsoever they think of themselves) may possibly be in an Error; it wil fall out that the greater part wil be withdrawn from their Errors: and that therefore it is that they abide so obstinate in them, because they cannot so much as suspect any Error; so that whosoever would teach contrary to their judgment, they judg him to be presently suppressed, not once having his cause heard. Who sees not therefore, that it is good advice for such men, not presently to reject what ever they hear different from their own perswasions; but to pause a while and think every man with himself; to me indeed such things seem true which I have hitherto with the multitude beleaved; but what if that befall me which betides very many, that I should most err in that whereof I seem to be most certain. Why may I not heare the man first? why should I not weigh what he saies. Pauls precept is, *Despise not Prophecies, prove all things, hold fast that which is good.* Now I would very fain know of thee who ever thou art, that certainly thinkest thy self free from all Error; do I say thinkest, yea rather who seest and feelest as much; which way thinkest thou may persons erring be brought to suspect that they are in an Error, that so they may be more attentive to such as would deal with them? I suppose thou wilt grant by this Reason, that very many men do err, and they not only of the unlearned vulgar sort, but very learned persons (which the almost infinite number of Controversies agitated amongst them witness) so that while they think themselves to be

1 Thes. 5.

undoubtedly in the right, they may be notwithstanding involved in greatest *Errors*; & that they are wise, who remembering that they are men, and may be deceived as soon as any others (though they know not themselves to *erre*) yet as being in a possibility of *Error*, do give diligent eare to such as profess to teach them better, and that so, as not to allow of any thing without diligent search, and imploring the help of God to that effect. Go to then; with whom wouldst thou that this Reason and instance should be of force? with them that think aright? I suppose thou wilt not say so, but with them that *erre*. But this is that I would know, *viz.* how thou canst make this Reason more prevalent with those that *err*, then with such as *err* not? canst thou do it by alleadging that they are in an *error*? they cannot think it possible that they should *err*; and that is it which the Reason produced aimes at, to bring them into some suspicion of *Error*. if so be then, that those who *err*, do think themselves to be as far from *Error*, as they that think aright, yea verily for the most part are more confident of the two, for a fool (as the wise man speaks) is delighted with his own reasonings, but a wise man asks counsel; truly, I can see no other way, in case *Error* be in the *Church*, to make it to be acknowledged, then to make this general conclusion: that forasmuch as it is a property of Mankind to *err*, no one person that is but a meer man ought to be so confident; as to perswade himself he cannot *err*, and that what ever come into *Controversie*, he should but in vain give eare to what any man shal say concerning the same. But we must not (wilt thou say) doubt in the *Doctrine* of Religion, but know assuredly what to hold. So say I too, and therefore this knot is very hard to unty. To resist the *Truth*, and not to acknowledg and reject an *Error*, if there be any that can make it appear, is a very great evil. But impossible it is, that he which *errs* should acknowledg his *Error*, before he come to think it possible that he may *err*, whereby he should be content to give eare to any that would convince him; and yet a man must not waver in the *Doctrine* of Religion: which way now, and by what thrid shal we get out of such an intricate labyrinth? Let us not despair yet, we must, and wil find a way out. Thus much we have concluded upon, that truth is never to be opposed, and that he which *errs*, whiles he is in an *Error*, cannot understand he *errs*; likewise that it hinders much the acknowledgment of the *truth*, for any

any one to perswade himself strongly that he is in no *Error*, and that the right way, and first step to the acknowledgment of an *Error*, is to have a suspicion thereof. Shal we then allow a perpetual hesitation in matters of Faith? That we wil not neither. I conceive it rather our duty to endeavour, to attain to the most certain knowledg that may be had. What other course shal we take? For as much as a man may, concerning a point, be either wel perswaded, believing as the thing is, or ill, beleeving otherwise then the thing is; and for as much as he that is wel perswaded may be either perfectly perswaded, which befalls him that hath obtained a certain and clear knowledg, or imperfectly perswaded, which is seen in them who imbrace the *truth* indeed, but are led only by opinion, not being able to give a sure reason why they so think: certain it is, that man who hath so sure a knowledg, as to be able to render true, constant, and infallible causes of his judgment, cannot be brought to doubt, or to be seduced concerning the point. Whence it follows that whatever counsel you can give him, that he suspect himself of *error*, it can noway hinder him in respect of those things wherof he hath such knowledg; much less can it hurt him that is tainted with ill opinions. For he that so errs, as to suspect himself of *error*, doth not now altogether err, but inclines partly to *error* partly to *truth*. It remains then that we consider, what we may think of such, as imbracing true opinions, have not however attained to the perfect *science* of the things themselves. In such persons truly suspicion of *error* is no other then a certain approach to *error*, which in it self we cannot but judge naught: howbeit for a man falsely to *arrogate* unto himself knowledg, when he hath only an opinion, is an *error*. Now as *error* cannot be good; so it is an evil thing to be in danger of any pernicious *error*. But he that is led by opinions only, and is not sure of what he holds, may possibly be led into *error*. He is then in danger, lest it may so fall out, whereas the best way is to be free from all danger. Whereupon, like a, though all pain be reckoned among evils, yet if it be undergone for the removing of some grievous disease, it appears in the notion of a great good; so, opinion being an infirm & feeble knowledg, and if not a disease yet a constitution of the mind near approaching to a disease, he that shal cast into a mans mind a suspicion of *error*, by instancing in so many men, that while they dream'd of nothing less, did yet walk in greatest darkness; to the end he may show him the way to attain to a sure and stedfast knowledg: we ought

to judge this man, not to give pernicious but healthful and very necessary counsel. To the end therefore that thou mayst not oppose at any time, and trouble a man that would teach the *Truth*, either thou must of necessity attain unto a certain firm knowledg of what ever may at any come time into *Controversie* in the *Church*, which what a piece of work it will be any man may judge; or certainly if at any time thou shalt hear any matter which sounds new in thine ear, before thou condemnest it, thou must pause a while and think with thy self what kind of knowledg thou hast of that thing. And lest thou be deceived, taking a vehement perswasion for certain science, let us consider what we are to account science and what opinion; and this it becomes us to do, not as *Philosophers*, but as the Disciples of *Christ*. There is nothing more certain then that we (in point of *Religion*) can hold nothing for certain but from the testimony of Gods Word. This many texts of Scripture witness: let these few serve in stead of many. *David* himself King of *Israel* and a famous Prophet, when he had resolved to build a Temple to the Lord; yet could he not divine the mind of God in that point: Neither did *Nathan* a great Prophet likewise come nearer the mind of God, in his exhorting *David* to perform his purpose; for by him God forbid *David* to build any Temple, which is a considerable instance. Now of *Joshua* the Successor of *Moses*, it is written that he was indued with the spirit of wisdom, and that God promised to be with him perpetually, yet is he commanded to have regard to fulfil the Law which he had received from *Moses*, and not to turn from it to the right hand or to the left; and the reason why is added; that thou mayst know (saith the Lord) what thou oughtest to do. Whence we may understand, that then we are sure of a thing if we have a Word of God for it. But how plainly have we this in another place? *My thoughts are not like your thoughts, saith the Lord: neither are my reasons like your reasons; but look how much the Heaven is higher then the Earth, so much are my thoughts above your thoughts, and my reasons above your reasons.* Neither is it sufficient in any sort to build upon the divine Scriptures on any fashion; but it is needful that we attain the knowledg of them by the interpretation of the *holy spirit*; for as much as we see so many differing judgments in matter of Religion, even amongst the most learned and most

Isaiah.

exercised in the reading of holy Scriptures. For *Paul* testifies, *that only the Spirit of God knows the things of God; neither doth mans sense understand the things of the Spirit; neither can he understand them, for they seem to be foolishness unto him: but the spiritual man judgeth all things.* Whereupon *James* exhorts him that wants wisdom to ask it of God. From all which it is gathered, that he hath the knowledg of divine things, who both depends only on the *Word of God*, and hath attained the true understanding thereof by help of no other interpreter but the Spirit of God himself. And all this wil they willingly grant to whom we now address our speech. But here is coucht a great difficulty. For many perswade themselves that they can prove what they hold from testimony of Gods Word, & that the spirit of God is their guide and teacher to furnish them with the understanding thereof, who notwithstanding err monstrously. They suppose they begged of God for his *Spirit* and that they have placed all their confidence in his assistance, who are not aware in the mean while that their trust hath been in any thing rather than in him. But before thou canst conclude of a surety that thou hast obtained his Spirit and learned any thing by the guidance thereof, what ever thing there is which might move thee to think so or so, or confirm a perswasion taken up, such as is an opinion of thine own or anothers knowledg, judgment, spirit, holiness; likewise the multitude of those that think as thou thinkest, or of those which praise thee, admire thee, depend upon thy judgment; also the long while that the opinion opposed hath been in repute; finally, whatsoever is not God or his Word, from it thou oughtest to withdraw thine eyes, thy mind, and all thy thoughts, no less then if there were no such thing in the world; and then all other hope and confidence being cast away, to fix thine eyes and mind on God alone, to depend only upon him, and thus affected in this posture to ask his Spirit. Thus if thou shalt do, if frequently, if seriously, if believingly thou shalt do it; then mayst thou with good reason conclude, that thou art not possessed with any pernicious *Error*, or in case thou art possessed with any, that it shal be made known to thee. But these things are such as we can with much more facility expresse them in words then in deeds, so liable is the disposition of man to *Error*; yea so apt naturally is he to put trust in any thing rather than God. In a word,

so

so fly, so industrious, so wel furnished is *Sathan* with divers Arts to deceive: that when thou hast done all thou canst, it will be an hard matter in some point or other not to be overseen. Which I would not have any man think, I therefore speak, as supposing there can be no certainty in divine matters, which conceit I am as far from as he that is farthest. But this is that which I would by no means suffer, that he which as yet is arrived unto no certainty, and is *peradventure* plunged as yet in false opinions, should *arrogate* unto himself knowledg; but I would have him endeavor to get it indeed, and endeavor as he ought to do. He that hath once attained clear and certain knowledg, exhort him as long as you wil, and let him endeavor as much as he can to suspect himself of *Error*, yet shal he never be able to entertain any such suspition of himself. Such kind of exhortations then, can move suspitiō only in them, who either *err* or have not yet attained firm and constant knowledg, but may attain the same as yet: to whom whiles the right way of attaining thereto is shewn, and they are admonished of what blocks and trapps in their way they ought to take heed, truly I cannot see but that the counsel we give them is very safe and profitable. Wherefore that a man may not any ways offend by opposing the *Truth* either in publick or private, by word of mouth or by writing, I would perswade him by all means possible, that whatever his judgment be concerning Religion, he would examine particularly by what Reasons he hath bin moved to be so perswaded, with what diligence, with what assurance of the spirits assistance, he hath searched the Scriptures, with what circumspection and prudence, he hath withdrawn his eyes from whatever is neither God nor his Word, also with what confidence he hath powred forth his praiers to God, in a word, howfar he is assured of whatever he holds. How be it, when thou shalt have done all this with as much care as possible thou canst (modesty being always pleasing to God and he of such a nature as that he cannot despise the prayers of that man, who begs a daily encrease of the certainty of his faith) if yet somewhat appearing new and therefore false and impious shal wound thine eares, as yet I conceive it the best way, that before thou oppose, thou pause a while and think with thy self again and again, what assurance thou hast, that such a speech is false and impious: and that again thou wrastle with God by most fervent prayers,

prayers, that if thou beest in the right, he would confirm thee therein more and more; if humane frailty have overtaken thee, that he would open thine eyes and give thee so much light, as to acknowledge and renounce thine *Error*. For if *We Who are evil* (as our Lord said) *are so affected, that we give good things to our children, so as when they ask bread we give them not a stone; nor a serpent when they ask a fish*: What shal we think of our heavenly Father? Shal we think that he, while we never leave asking of him the certainty of the *truth*, being enflamed with a desire of obeying his wil, and fearing lest by *Error* we should wage *War* against the *Truth*; shal we (I say) think, that in stead of assurance of the *truth* he wil give us *errors*, in stead of *light* he wil send us *darkness*? How far were this both from his infinite goodness and his most faithful promises? Again, since (as we have said) we can be assured of nothing unless we be taught of God, neither can we in our prayers limit God a time within which he should teach us, though we have turned away our sight from all things besides God, though we have placed all our confidence in God, it may notwithstanding come to pass, that we are not as yet taught by God, but that he is about to teach us by him, whom we account to be a seducer; for if he had already taught us, he would have added so much light and certainty, that we should have had no reason to doubt; only let us beware lest *Satan* put a trick upon us; we must remember what a crafty fox he is, how old an impostor, how plausibly (to use the Apostles phrase) he can deceive in the person of an *Angel of light*; and let us make sure account that no body can beware of him too much. Let us abandon that same expression, its an old *Error* frequently confuted, long since confuted; what if so be the point have been hitherto ill-maintained, what if hitherto *Satan* hath playd the part of *Opposer* and *Maintainer* himself alone. But be it so, suppose it to be an *Error*; if it be but to draw the persons erring by thine example unto that same gentleness and readiness to hear which is requisite, that they may not be obstinate towards such as would inform them, be thou thy self so gentle, as first to hear and understand before thou condemn them. If it be but that they may not have reason to complain, that their cause hath been condemned before it was heard. What? wil the *Truth* become less apparent by the often discussion, and not rather every day more certain & clear?

E

No-

Nothing verily is more easie then to begin a contention, but when it is once begun it is far more hard to end it, So that *Solomon* spake to this purpose most fitly, when he compared the beginner of *strife* to him that opens a way to *water* (suppose collected into some great and vast lake) for at first indeed the matter may seem smal & contemptible, but the water makes it self a larger & deeper passage, grows stronger and stronger, bears away the banks, lays wast all it meets with, eats it self channels, covers the fields with sand and mud, plucks trees up by the roots, throws down buildings and makes a rueful spectacle where ever it comes; just so from smal and contemptible beginnings of *Controversie* & *strife*, we see at last the whole world filled with dissentions, calumnies and clamors. So that he which conceives not himself bound to shun the moving of a *controversie*, as being one of the greatest evils, unless he be merely compelled thereunto, shews himself to be either a man of no judgment, or one that cares not a rush for the *Churches* welfare. Wherefore though it be apparent that it is a false *Tenet* which is spread abroad, yet before thou begin to contend in the least measure about it, thou must consider of what moment and weight the thing is. For concerning vain questions we have a command of *Paul*, not to refute whatever shal be falsly asserted, but to avoyd the questions themselves. So that I conceive our duty only is to endeavor that mens minds may be diverted from such curious unprofitable questions, not so much in regard they may be false, but rather lest they vainly consume pretious time, besides that it often falls out that while men strive about the slightest matter that can be, while mens wits are disturbed by the heat of contention, such things may be rashly alledged on both sides, as being of greater weight, may not a little impair the purity of *Doctrin*. Add herunto that men fall as soon to reproaching, railing, scolding when they contend about a tale of *Robinhood*, as when the *controversie* is concerning the most weighty subject, which are faults that a *Christian* heart ought exceedingly to abhor. But here you wil say is the great difficulty, the great labor to distinguish between questions unprofitable and questions that contain matter of damnable *Error*. For whatever a man shal pitch his mind upon, presently *Satan* endeavors to perswade him that it is a weighty point, so that unless he know assuredly what to hold, he cannot assure himself of any hope
of

of falvation. Verily this is my judgment, that he, who not out of vain curiosity or ambition to become a subtile disputant in matters divine, but out of true piety towards God and an earnest desire of his own salvation is exercised in the reading of the Word of God, wil easily know what questions are foolish & vain, and which are unworthy to be handled. But for as much as many are much to seek in this point, not without the Churches great detriment; it wil not be impertinent, to make enquiry after some sure way whereby a man may without mistake discern the one sort of questions from the other.

This then is past peradventure, if there be some one thing, at which as the *mark* and *end* all the Doctrine of *Christianity* doth aim, whatever thing being known conduceth nothing to the *attainment* of that end, all questioning about that thing wil be vain. Wherefore it concerns us to see, if there be any such end; what it is, and what those things be which may conduce thereunto. Now *John* testifies that such an end there is, and what it is, in these words *Many other signs also Jesus did, which are not contained in this Book, but these are written that ye may beleeve that Jesus is the Messiah the Son of God, and that beleeving ye may obtain life by him.* By which words we are plainly taught, that the end & scope of *Christian Doctrine* is *eternal life*, whereupon it follows, that whatsoever may be of any use for the attaining of *eternal life*, that thing may be accounted profitable to be known, and whatsoever can confer nothing to that end ought not to be regarded. How now! (may some man say) not a word of the honor and glory of God in this consideration? I answer; whatsoever things make for the glory of God, without doubt, the knowledg of all such things further our salvation, neither is the glory of God in any thing more manifested then in the salvation of man. If so be then there be any thing that we are obliged to do to the end we may attain *eternal life*, for as much as we cannot do that thing, unless we shal understand that it is our duty so to do the same, it is necessary that we know so much. And for as much as God hath made a Law which who so keeps not exactly, hath imposed upon him the punishment of eternal destruction; which Law because a man cannot keep, and there is some other thing, which if he do he shall notwithstanding obtain salvation; he ought to un-

derstand both that he cannot satisfie the Law, and what that other thing is which if he shal do wil be a means to save him. And seeing that same other thing is; if he shal be perswaded, that the Son of God being made man satisfied his *Father* in respect of the punishment due unto his sins, and that he is by his blood made clean from all the defilement of sin; howbeit holiness of life and innocency of conversation is required, not that in confidence thereof we should promise our selves salvation; but that our manners may be such as becomes the children and servants of God, bought with so great a price: These things (I say) being so, it is necessary both that a man know the promises which are made concerning *Christ*, and that he be not ignorant wherein holiness and innocency of life and conversation do consist. And for as much as there are many things which may either induce us to place all hope of our salvation in *Christ* and (according to our power) to keep the commands of God, or hinder us from so doing and delay us, it is very profitable to know what those things are which may either help or hinder. Now we are perswaded to place all our confidence in God and enflamed to love him, by which love we are drawn to endeavor obedience to his Commandments, by the knowledg of his *nature*, not as *Philosophers* desire to know it that they may subtilly argue about it, but so as to understand how he is beyond all conceit wise, good, gentle, merciful, how exact and punctual he is in keeping his promises. That his *nature* is such his works witness, *viz.* The *Creation* of the world and all things therein contained, but especially examples of his care for such as have worshipped him with a pious and holy fear, how he hath helped them in times of exigency, how he is wont to defend them from the lying in wait of the Devil and the world; also how great and grievous sinners he hath upon their repentance comforted and saved; how great a hater nevertheless of sin he is wont to shew himself; and the like. To the knowledg of his *nature*, the remembrance of his frequently repeated promises being joyned, doth exceedingly confirm and strengthen faith, and forcibly puts men upon a serious resolution of amendment of life. Hereunto may be added the explication of Prophecies, especially such as concern the present times, which being a clear testimony of the providence of God, make exceedingly to the confirmation of mens minds. Whatsoever matters of this nature

nature are very profitable to be known and discoursed of by all men at home and abroad in private and in publick. And because we can perform none of those things lately mentioned, unless assisted by the help and *spirit* of God, and God wil have us ask this *spirit* and assistance of him, we must both know that God would have us so to do, and keep in mind the promises that he wil give us these things upon our asking, in a word, we must in no case be ignorant in what manner we ought to call upon God and how we ought to render to him thanks for benefits received. Contrariwise, we shal be much hindred concerning the premises, if we shal judge otherwise concerning the *nature* of God, concerning his wil and whatever may come to pass, then his Word directs us. A great hinderance too is the corruption of our *nature*, which very forcibly withdraws our mind and thoughts, yea ravishes us to contrary intentions. Whereupon we being necessitated to wage perpetual war with our inbred pravity, to the end we may render our nature subject to the divine wil, it is in like manner very necessary that we know our *natural* *sinfulness* and whatever the *Scripture* shews us for the mitigation and subduing thereof. And for as much as it is not sufficient that a man care for himself alone, but every man is bound according to the measure of the *spirit* he hath received and the course of life whereunto he is called to seek the good of the whole *Church*, not only of the Members thereof now living, but likewise of posterity; whatsoever is of that tendency as to make any doctrine profitable to life hard to be attained, or may give occasion either to forsake or lightly to esteem the same, it is of great consequence that we be not ignorant thereof. And in as much as the *Scriptures* admonish us that we have a great and most cunning adversary (who is named from his enmity) who without ceasing plots against us whereby to ruin us and divert us from God; who can doubt but that it wil be very profitable, wel to understand his arts and by what wisdom they are to be avoyded? In a word, no doctrine can be profitable unless it have some use; if it consist only in speculation & tend to no action, it is to be accounted vain and foolish. Yea verily, every doctrine that may anywise refer to the attainment of *salvation* is not to be counted profitable, so as that it should be requisite to handle it curiously, or, if difference arise, that we need much labor to assure our selves what to hold, but this condition must be adjoynd,

that there be not other points that wil easily supply the defect thereof. That this is so, appears, because it being necessary that we should beleeve that *Iesus* is the *Messiah* the Savior foretold by the Prophets, and to this end all the miracles which he did were directed, that thereby it might be known who he was, yet were they not all committed to writing, but such and so many as were sufficient that men might readily know who he was. So that if so be any should content that our Lord wrought some miracle not mentioned in those books which we have of his life and doings, it would not be worth the while to search out the *truth* of that matter, or to make *Controversie thereabout*, forasmuch as though it should be found to be true, there could be no other profit reap'd thereby, but that *Iesus* should be prov'd to come from God, and to be the man he pretended himself to be, which thing many other miracles do so fully witness, which are out of question, that greater certainty cannot be desired: on the contrary, though we had no assurance of any such miracle, the Authority of other miracles recorded in Scripture by the holy pen-men thereof, is not a jot thereby diminished. Whereby it would come to pass, that whether we shal beleeve that miracle or beleeve it not, we should neither win nor lose by the means. And forasmuch as, in case Christian Doctrine should seem to contain any absurdity, or to maintain contradictions, it would hinder those that are unconverted from embracing the same; whatever tends to the removing of such absurdities, and to reconcile such contradictions, cannot but be profitable, Unless happily such reconciliations cannot be accomplished without great stirs, *Controversies*, and dissentions. By such like ways then, it seems easy to know profitable questions from vain and unprofitable, provided that mens judgments be not before hand disturbed with partiality and the heat of contention; and before they have already begun to contend about the point in question, as about some weighty matter: but when men are once bewitched as it were with the opinion hereof, their inbred pride, hatred, indignation, custome in *Error*, and *Sathan* suffer not their judgment to execute its office. Who amongst us at this day doth not admire, that the ancient professors of Christianity did contend with such heat and earnestness of mind, about the day on which *Easter* (as they call it) was to be celebrated, and about other matters

matters of very light concernment; whereas in those times, they were thought very weighty points: we looking upon them with unbiassed judgments, plainly perceive, what an unworthy thing it was for the Church of God to be divided into sects, upon so slight occasions. My advise therefore is, that as soon as thou shalt perceive somewhat untrue to be taught, before thou set thy self to contradict it, thou consider if it be not a matter of little or no weight, and if it be, that thou make no contention about it; or, according to that opportunity which the time, place thine own person, and his thou shalt deal with, may afford, that thou do only exhort the man to leave such speculations and apply himself to more weighty matters, and I would have thee do it as artificially as may be, so as not to put him into any passion. But the true way of bringing men from vain questions is this; if those whose place it is either to teach the people, or to read divinity in the Schools, and those that apply themselves to write, omitting curious questions, and abandoning vain ostentation of wit, would insist upon and urge only such points as tend to the confirmation of faith, to the extirpation of vice, to instil the fear of God, cherish piety, comfort the afflicted, and keep them from desperation, to keep such as would be counted Christian brethren, in brotherly love, with a sweet harmony of affections, and the like. Neither are these Subjects such as are to be slighted for their commonness. For in the first place, though the heads themselves of such Doctrine are not very many, yet they are of very large extent, and then, all weariſomness in the auditor may be taken away by the variety of handling them; especially if the preachers of the Gospel shall mark, what Doctrines at every season the people most stand in need of. As in case they be lift up by prosperity, and give the reyn to luxury, let them fear them by the propheticall threatnings, and so reduce them into order. If affliction lye heavy upon them, let them be comforted: If they languish with sluggishness, let them be stirred up to honest employments. If they seem too intent upon the world, let them be admonished of the shortness of this life and diverted from too much care for worldly things, and thus let them insist upon such Doctrines as are most suitable to every season. Neither see I cause why we should count those arguments too common, which can never sufficiently be imprinted in our minds.

So

So that time wil always be wanting for such arguments, so far shal we be from wanting matter to take up the time, though we keep within the bounds prescribed. Now this is that which may often give occasion to start vain questions, if in expounding the holy Scriptures to the people, a man shal as it were make a Law to himself to dwell long upon every word without distinction; which seems now to be the common practise. For when they cannot always find profitable matter to discourse of, they are forced to give way to curiosity. Such men there be haply, who being ful of matter and abundant in wit, and therefore able to take an occasion of discoursing upon what Subject they please, from any text or word; may handle largely any Scripture, without just cause of reprehension. But this is not every mans Lot (as it is in the Proverb) *Non omnibus datū est adire Corinthum.* They that are not so wel stored, shal do much more discreetly, if they wil suit their endeavors to their abilities. Where many things profitable to be heard suggest themselves, let them insist long, if the text afford not many things, let them not be ashamed to put a little shoo on a little foot, and to proceed in their explication the faster. For what matters it, if having made twenty Sermons upon some one Chapter of the Gospel, thou shalt go over the next in one discourse? The holy Ghost would not teach all things in every place, but one in one place, another in another. Neither let they knowledg be all powred forth upon one place, though thou mightest do it handsomely enough, much less be thou so absurd and unreasonable, as to desire rather to descend to foolish commentations, or to inculcate such matters as all thy auditors eares are already ful of, then to be thought not to have made many Sermons upon the explication of every word. Some offend in this kind to make foolish ostentation of their fulness, others offend by giving more heed to the example of some preachers, then to what is necessary to be done. Yea and much greater occasion there is of such curiosity in respect of those which expound the Scriptures in Universities. For since there be already many commentaries upon them in print, which the *Students* themselves may read, and the professors are loath that their labor should be thought vain or of smal necessity; that they should only repeat other mens expositions, meditations, arguments, and their very words; but desire stil to have somewhat which the
Scholars

Scholars shal not find in their books : besides that they are compelled to make things change their places, bringing what hath been fore-alleged upon one place to the explication of another ; that they may set forth their own acuteness, they do either invent objections that they might answer them ; or they coyn new words and new manner of expressions, or they raise new *Controversies*. Better it were in truth, that there were no professors at all, then any such as these. For what other thing wil they effect, then to reduce the study of Religion into sophistical vanities ? What would you have them do, may some men say ? What ! truly any thing rather then thus to mispend their leasure. What should I desire them to do, but not to deprave, not to pervert such things as have bin said to the purpose, and in fit place, not to darken and obscure them by idle questions. And if any thing hath slipped former Expositors, if they see any thing which they did not, herein let them make proof of their own diligence. But there is yet a worse fault then this ; many think it not enough to teach thus by word of mouth, but they wil have their commentaries in print, setting out large volumnes, that matter of wrangling doth every day encrease. How many Commentaries have we already upon *Pauls* Epistle to the *Romans* ? Every day some or other new one comes forth. For every man that with some applause expounds it in the Schooles must needs set forth a Commentary. Howbeit should you collect what he explains more aptly then others, or what he brings wholly of his own ; your gleanings wil be very slender. The rest wil be what other former writers either upon the same or some other place had formerly discoursed. And whereas our later Expositors do of purpose abstain from the words of the former, and they for the most part had prepossessed the most fit forms of speaking, which relished more of the spirit and were most apt to move affection ; these must of necessity use less fitting phrases, such as favor only of a vain ostentation of wit, but leave no sting of affection in the minds of the Readers. Those who err in this kind through defect of judgment, supposing themselves not unprofitably thus imployed, may with admonition be in some sort excused. But as for such as are spurred to write by ostentation and ambition, I shal not stick to count such men among the prime plagues of the Church, as persons most wickedly hiring themselves out to do the Devils work. But let us now proceed.

F

Sathans

Satans Cabinet Counsel,

The second Book.

The Argument.

WHen upon serious examination we have found that a point in question is an Error of weighty concernment, what course we are to take. Satans aim is first to make a man embrace an erroneous doctrine: If he cannot do that, his next endeavour wil be to inflame him with an inordinate, turbulent, passionate spirit of opposition against the said Error, whereby whiles he thinks to suppress it he shal exceedingly assist Satan in the propagation thereof. He that spreads and teaches an Error may be a dear child of God, though left for a time. A pious person may and ought to be exceedingly moved to see the Name and Truth of God blasphemed by a spreader of erroneous tenets, but it must be with a zeal rightly qualified, and which comes not from Satan, but the Spirit of God. The nature of a right zeal against a Seducer. Great difference to be made between him that being deceived himself deceives others, and him that willingly, wittingly and maliciously seduceth. How a malicious seducer ought to be dealt with that he may desist from seducing. Reproaches and criminations, not only unprofitable but hurtful both in respect of the seducer, the seduced, and those whom we would preserve from infection. If any good do come by reproaches and revilings, it may be otherwise and by better and safer ways obtained. To brand any man with tokens of infamy, belongs to none but the Magistrate: It ill becomes any private Christian, especially those that are teachers of others. They must be free from all appearance of evil, and rather Gods then Men, that shal work any good upon seducers and seduced persons by reproaches. Two things of greatest importance to reclaim a seducer, viz, to produce such demonstrations as may have greatest power

power to convince him of his Error ; and to provide that he may consider the same with a calm, quiet, untroubled spirit. We must therefore carefully avoyd any words or behaviour that may move him to passion. We must avoyd cavilling at words and drawing absurdities from his assertions. Many men delighted by mis-interpreting their adversaries words, to infer some great absurdity. Many oppose their own imaginations in stead of their adversaries errors. If our adversary assert any thing which seems very absurd, we ought to suspect that we do not rightly understand him, and rather to desire him to explain himself then to triumph over the supposed absurdity. God reveals matters divine to babes and sucklings. Our adversary is much wrought upon when he sees we perfectly understand his meaning. Our chief endeavor ought to be perfectly to know what and how he holds. A great fault to charge our adversaries with holding such things as to our understandings seem to follow from their tenets. We ought barely to report their sayings without addition, detraction or alteration. All desire of victory to be banish't from Christian debates. We must take heed we be not ashamed to acknowledg what we were before ignorant of, nor to learn the truth by the meanest instrument. We must not be over confident in our assertions. Affirm or deny without exclaiming, was ever the like heard, wil any man say so or so &c. We must use our adversary not contemptuously but with civility and humanity. Our endeavour in every controversy must be that Christ may overcome, being willing to be accounted the offscouring of the world, so truth may be advanc't. In every Controversy a double combate, between us and our dissenting opposite, and between us and Sathan. For a man to give ground in di putation, is not so shameful in the sight of others as in his own Account. What a man loses in reputation of learning and knowledge, he gains in the estimation of candor, ingenuity, sincerity when he lays down an Error. What meditations we ought to be conversant in before we begin a dispute, to the end we may neither our selves be moved, nor move our adversary to passion. A mans nobility, Wealth, Authority, Reputations are the Weapons wherewith Satan fights against him. The grand combate in all disputes is with Satan. The main quarrel, is not so much the point in question, as the Peace and Tranquillity, and safety

of the Church of Christ. A disputant must take heed of being too wise in his own eyes. No vice so hardly rooted out of a mans spirit as Arrogance. A medicine against arrogance. The top of humane wisdom to suspect a mans own wisdom and seek Counsel. We cannot dispute with any person so despicable, but look how much we think our selves wiser then him, by so much he takes himself to be wiser then Us. The use of this Observation.

LIB. II.

IN the former book we have discoursed concerning unprofitable questions, how they may be distinguished from profitable ones, and how they ought to be avoided; it follows now that we should declare what may befit a godly man to do, if it shal appear that the business in Controversie be a matter of great weight. And here doubtless, if thou wilt give eare to *Satan*, he will endeavour to advance his designs exceedingly by thy means. So that, some error shall not be extirpated, but spread abroad far and neer, yea and become as it were the seed of many other errors; so that contentions, discords, variance, sects, devastations, and mighty huriburlies shall thence arise; and to the end he will labour might and main, that no moderate, circumspect, grave counsel may take place; but that all things be transacted rashly, without advice, confusedly. What now shal a Christian and prudent spirit do in this case? Shal he think of obeying *Satan* and furthering his counsels? Wil he make him his Counsellor and Captain? Wil he not rather with all diligence of mind provide that all things be managed with the greatest discretion possible? So that not a word, as neer as may be, shal pass which is not exactly fitted by reason and polished? Wil he not weigh with himself again and again what is needful to be done? Here, here indeed is need of prudence, resist the beginnings whiles the flame is yet smal, if thou shalt let it alone a little while and give fuel to it likewise, who shal be able to quench the Fire? These things I say are to be foreseen in-time. If thou shalt hear any impious Doctrine, what thinkest thou wil the speech of *Satan* be in thy heart? He wil try peradventure, if he can bring the Error in credit with thee also: but if he find the doors,

doors shut on this side, and shal thee another way; O abominable wickedness! (wil he say) O this fellow deserves that the Earth should open its mouth and swallow him up quick, that durst once speak such abhominable words; tis pity he were not burnt with fire from Heaven: The basest and wickedest fellow that ever the Earth bare! Is it possible that any man should so much as once think of such things, much less account them true? If thou give way to such thoughts as these, what canst thou do or say which wil not occasion a thousand mischiefs? Perswade thy self, that the Spirit of God is not author of such counsels but *Satan*. Such thoughts are not fit to take away the evil, but to increase it more and more, and render it incapable of all cure. Somewhat else there is to be done to remedy this evil. And first, how knowest thou, but that this man haply (what ever he may seem to be) is one of Gods elect, whom God indeed hath suffered to fall, out of some secret but most wise and loving purpose of his own, that he may raise him again with much more glory? whom didst thou but know to be such an one, couldst thou entertain any inhumane thoughts against him, who is ordained to the possession of the glory of the Elect, and to be an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven, against thy brother, against a member of Christ, against a servant, yea and a son of God? But (thou wilt say) by this reason the Magistrate must suffer thieves, robbers, cut-throats and other criminal offenders, for as much as all such may be of the number of the elect, such as may in time be reclaimed. I answer; a godly and wise Magistrate when he punishes such like offenders, he doth it not to satisfie his own hatred, but executes that office whereunto he is called of God, knowing that he is bound to obey Gods revealed wil whatever his own reason may notwithstanding prompt him unto. Even as *Abraham* was ready at Gods command to offer his most beloved and most innocent son *Isaac*. And in the mean time he omits no office of humanity towards such as are to be put to death. But thou wilt say further: Can the ears then of that man which loves God hear accursed speeches against God, and be no more moved then if they nothing concerned him? I answer and grant, that a man ought to be moved and vehemently moved in such a case, but would not allow that motion to be a rash head-long zeal, but a zeal guided by the most

most accurate reason, not of Satans but of the Spirit of Gods be-
getting. If thou hadst a brother or a son rather, whom thou excee-
dingly lovedst; thou couldst not see him catch a dangerous fall, but
(especially in case he were therewith grievously wounded) thou
wouldst be much moved, but with what kind of motion or affection?
So as to inveigh against him with harsh language, to overwhelm him
with revilings and reproaches? Yea rather thou wouldst run to
him and raise him up as gingerly as thou canst. Thou wouldst bid
him be of good cheer, and leave nothing undone which might free
him from, or at least mitigate his pain. Thou wouldst spare no
pains and watch with him whole nights together. And in case the
anguish of his wound shal make him froward, thou wilt neverthe-
less remit nothing of thy great tenderness over him. Such would
I have the motion of thy mind to be, to be grieved at the fall of
thy brother; to be grieved that God is offended; to be grieved
for their sakes whom he hath mis-taught so a that they are in dan-
ger to lose their salvation. But let the effects of thy griefs be, that
thou endeavor with all thy might either wholly to remove or to
lessen the evil; and that thou take heed again and again (as in a
business wherein thou canst not err without great danger) that
thou neither do or speak any thing which may increase the same,
nor of which thou canst not foresee some certain hope of profit;
and that thou wilt so order thy self, that in case thou shalt at any
time observe, that what thou didst to a good end had a bad issue,
thou wilt be content with the hazard of thy reputation to correct
thine *Error*.

Furthermore, three things seem to require our consideration: what
course is to be taken concerning him that sows *Errors*; what is
to be done concerning such as have assented unto *Errors*; and
what concerning such as are in danger to be infected. Concerning
the *Author* of the *Error*, thou must be exceeding careful, what
end and scope all thy counsels aim at. Many weighing what a de-
structive thing *Error* in Religion is, and consequently what dam-
mage he brings to the *Church of God* who disperseth *Errors*, they
think nothing can be enacted too severely against him. Whereupon
at every first word they break out into railings and reproaches, and
fill the world with out-cries, and a man would wonder how they
please themselves in so doing, and how rarely they conceive they
have

have defended the cause of *Christ*. Neither do these men much regard, whether a man teach false out of ignorance, or to serve his own lust. Yea rather as though they were assured that never any such thing is done but out of malice, they deal with every one as with a malicious seducer. Hence come these kind of expressions: The filthy beast was not ashamed to speak so and so. The most cunning impostor hath left nothing unattempted whereby he might poyson simple people, with the like expressions; and a man would wonder to see how fluent some men are and copious in such kind of Rhetorick. Now if so be a man shal think that he teacheth true and godly doctrines and that he is wel and holily employed, for this cause, by all the reasons he can he wil endeavor to cause his *Errors* to be received and conceive that he deserves much praise for so doing. If therefore thou shalt fall foul upon him, averring that he deals maliciously, impudently and wickedly, he wil think himself to be exceedingly injured. Whereupon he wil be moved and inflamed with anger and determine with himself to maintain his *Error* come what wil come, and to bandy back the injuries with a large requital. Then wil the people also take several sides, and all places wil be disquieted with contentions, scoldings, exclamations; So that no good, much hurt wil follow. Wherefore, as thy aun ought to be, that he which sows *Errors* may not escape a just and deserved censure; so oughtest thou to deal much otherwise with him that being deceived himself deceiveth others, then with him that doth it maliciously, and not to punish any for malice till that malice appear manifest, and it is the part of a wel-disposed mind in a doubtful case to incline to the more favorable construction, so as rather to make supposition of *Error* then malice. Furthermore, those men are wont to incur great hatred and to bring great calamities upon themselves who labour to broach new Tenets, so that he which should take any pleasure to stir up the hate of men against himself and to make himself to be inveighed against, must be a strange kind of man. Wherefore no man ought to suppose such a thing of any man, unless upon very great probability. And if it be a matter of *Error* and not of malice, verily thus I think, that if there be any thing in which clemency is to be used, here it ought to take place. Suppose a man fearing God, that look what himself accounts true and saving doctrine, would fain (if it were possible)

possible) that all the world might know and approve the same: in such a case, if you consider the mind of the man, will not any harsh dealing towards him appear to be inhumanity and cruelty. God hath not endowed him with more wit or judgment, neither hath he imparted to him a greater measure of his Spirit: if then thou shalt be angry with him, thou wilt seem to be angry not so much with him as with God that hath given him no greater ability. Now if so be thou look at the issue and fruit, nothing is more unprofitable then anger, indignations and invectives full of criminations and reproaches. But if so be there be knavery in the matter, I shal readily grant, no censure can be grievous enough, no punishment can be invented so severe, but to be many degrees short of so horrible wickedness: That there should be any man whom neither the fear of God nor the salvation of men could any ways move, but whiles he satisfies his own lust he sets all at six and seven. Howbeit, in case a man be worthy of great censure, it may not be expedient forthwith to deal with him according to his deserts. *All things* (saith the Apostle) *are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient.* So that we must consider again and again, what is most expedient, what regard is to be had of the person, what the time, what the place calls for, which things a mind disturbed with anger or any other passion cannot discern. For anger darkens a mans sight, duls, troubles and corrupts the judgment, is the worst counsellor that can be at all times and in all affairs. Be it that a man deserve to be stoned to death, to be torn in pieces limb from limb, this may be done by the sentence of the Magistrate, without wrath, without insultation, without railing. For what need is there of these affections, the enemies of all sound judgment? So shal it be done with greater gravity and profit, and the punishment wil seem to have proceeded not from the lust of man but from right reason it self. So likewise shal the example of such severity take much stronger impression in the minds of men. Now these are the things we ought to have a care of, that he which hath seduced the people, seduce them no more, but may suffer truth to take place; that those which have been seduced may be brought back again to the truth; that such who are yet sound may be armed against the contagion of *Error*. Whether or no it be also requisite that by some fitting punishment, as with a
 bridle

bridle, the daring of *extravagant* wits, should be curbed from blurting out whatever comes into their pates, we shal hereafter take into consideration. It may so fall out, that God wils that some should be sharply reprov'd, that at the last day they may have the less excuse and undergo the more severe punishment: Yet, as no man living can say who those persons be, so no man ought to be moved with the consideration of such; if there be any such whom God would have so severely chidden, he wil stir up such as shal do it, only let us take heed that *Satan* deceive us not, and that we permit not his instigations to be obtruded upon us, as if they were the breathings of the holy Ghost.

Now that thou mayst know by what means thou mayst withdraw a malicious seducer from seducing the people; thou must understand and consider, that he which shal set himself to commit so great a wickedness, must be a person extraordinarily Impious and void of all fear of God; concerning him therefore, whether present or absent, if thou shalt speak according to his merit, if thou shalt paint him out in his colours, and he forthwith shal abstain, what think you his meaning is? Wil he not seem openly to confess himself guilty of those crimes which thou hast charged him with? Is it possible thou should'st promise thy self so much moderation, so much relenting in a man void of the fear of God? Mayst thou not with much more reason expect, that he wil endeavor to clear himself of all crimes objected against him, and lay many more to thy charge? Wil he not beat his brains night and day to invent calumnies wherewith to defame thee? And what is there so far from *Truth*, which a craftily-compos'd discourse cannot make to appear probable? And when as Angers and Hatreds shal encrease here and there, when as daily vehement accusations shal be heard on both sides, the people shal be divided into contrary factions; what shalt thou gain thereby, which a man of a sound judgment would not much repent him of? If then there be any hope (which is very smal) to withdraw such a person from his enterprize, it doth not herein consist, in discovering and laying to his charge his malice; but herein rather, if forbearing to speak of his fraud and malice, thou shalt in the first place so defend the *truth*, and render it so clear that it may be almost felt: if thou shalt do this with the greatest dexterity and gentleness that may be: for as it is hard to pro-

cure from a wicked nefarious person, a willingness to appear vanquished by argument, and to have bin in an *Error*; so shouldst thou foolishly hope, that he would be content to have it thought that wittingly and willingly he hath, through excess of wickedness cheated the people. In like manner, towards the reducing of such as have bin seduced, I cannot see what good can be wrought by reproaching the Author. For it is commonly seen, that he which assents to any mans tenets, doth reverence that man and count him worthy of honor and praise; so that if you shal go about to disgrace him with reproaches, he wil say thou dost him great wrong, and wil be displeased with thee therefore. Now who knows not that good wil and hatred, and other passions of the mind have great power to sway the judgment this way or that way? Nor can I understand of what greater use it wil be towards the preservation of those that are as yet untainted. For its almost impossible that a speech full of revilings and accusations, should not flow from Anger, or some vehement motion of mind; now where such motions are, its a wonder, if all things be said with due circumspection, and not rather frequent oversights be committed, either by not rightly repeating the Seducers words, or not fitly answering his Arguments, whereby (as we have shewed) many inconveniences arise. And many men there are who are offended with all bad language, be there just cause, or be there not, for so speaking: and they wil think ill of, and disaffect that man, in whom they see a propensity to revile. Which, what else is it but to be the readier to assent unto those whom thou laborest, with all thy might, to disparage with reproaches? Especially if they shal have the Art, slyly and craftily to counterfeit some kind of modesty and patience. I confesse indeed with some, Criminations are of that force, that they cannot hear so much as the name of those that are reproached, without trembling; so far wil they be from suffering themselves to be by such persons seduced; but this falls out only then for the most part, when the persons criminating are in high repute for their uprightness, holyness and innocency, so that it may seem impossible that they should be drawn by any means to do injuriously towards any; which opinion settled in the minds of the people concerning thee, thou maist with much more ease falsely ascribe and arrogate, then procure unto thy self. For even we our selves oftentimes do not sufficiently

sufficiently know, by what spirit we are led; and be a man never so innocent, he shal never be able to hinder, but that many things designed with all possible sanctity, shal be mis-interpreted by the common people. And those persons themselves who by means of crimes alledged, have withdrawn all credit from the parties accused, would in all likelihood have done the like, when they had heard their tenets related, and without crimination, by sure and certain arguments and testimonies, candidly and civilly refused.

Hitherto (I conceive) we have cleared, how that from bad language, very many and great evils arise, and that the profit from thence arising, is either none at all or very little, and that it may more certainly by other ways be attained. It remains only that we speak of that same reason which is alledged, why such language should be used, *vis.* because by such kind of censures, the Authors of new tenets are curbed. And in the first place I desire it may be noted, that we do not in this place treat of the office of the Magistrate; it is the duty of private men which we handle in this place, and of such to whose care the instruction of the people in piety is committed. Concerning the Magistrate we shal speak hereafter. Now then, forasmuch as it is not in the power of any one, save the Magistrate, to censure or punish malefactors; other men must take heed they put not their sickle into that field which belongs not to them. There is to this purpose, an excellent passage of *Cicero* in his fourth book of *Common-wealths*. Our twelve tables (quoth he) contrariwise, enacting very few faults punishable by Death, made this for one, if by any practising or libelling a man should defame any one, or charge him with any heynous offence. A gallant law! forasmuch as the lives and conversations of men, ought to be subject to the Law, and the legal decisions and inquisition of Magistrates, not to the wits of Poets and pamphletters; neither ought any thing to be reproachfully charged upon any one, save with condition, that he may have liberty to answer and make his defence in open Court. Is a mans reputation so slight a matter, that it should be open to every bodys lust? If the supreme Magistrate of the Common-wealth should let himself to disgrace and defame whomsoever he pleased (though

there might be reason enough so to do) without process of law, who would not say he plaid the part of a Tyrant rather then a King? That therefore which the chief Magistrate cannot do but by manifest tyranny, shal any private man be suffered to do the same, shal it be permitted to him to do it, whose office it is, not so much by words as his own example to train the people in all Honesty and Moderation of mind? It is indeed the part of a Pastor, to reprehend, to chide, to rebuke, but he ought to do it not as an enemy, but as a father; so far forth as may be necessary and profitable for the amendment of those he hath to deal with. And he ought to remember, that it is not his, but the Magistrates office to censure or punish any one. And in case he shal plead that it belongs to him; let us consider with what success he shal use such a power in respect of the end proposed. I shal not deny, but that many men, terrified by the example of such persons as they see by such dealing, brought into great disgrace and hatred, may become thereby less, daring to vent such things, as curious studies frequently suggest: howbeit, unless the lives of such who are the Censurers, be void not only of vice but suspicion too, and unless their holyness and innocency be in all things apparent, so that they shal rather shew themselves to be certain divine creatures then of Mankind; I conceive they shal advance very little by such a course. For it wil just so fall out, as when a man shal stop the passage of a river with damms: the waters wil seem for a while to be restrained of their course, yet wil they seek a passage on all sides, and to be sure, swelling higher and higher, they wil overflow the bay, and at length having eate through and throwndown the damms, with mighty violence wil they break forth, and make, by many degrees, greater waste, then if their course had never bin restrained: for the man whose liberty is curbed by such a bridle, for a time indeed he keeps himself quiet, but it is much against his wil, and he collects poyson by little and little, wherewith being filled he must of necessity pour it forth, and it proves so much the more deadly, by how much the longer he kept it in: forasmuch as hatred against such as he conceives tyrannically to rule over him, is the cause, that, he is averse unto, and abhors their opinions. Hereupon he endeavors by all the cunning ways possible, first,

to draw away, now one, then another to his side; and so the evil grows by little and little and gathers strength, til at length the sect fears not to discover it self, and to disquiet the Common-wealth; which is plainly seen, among many other instances, in the so late sedition at *Munster*. And a wonderful thing it is, with what arts *Satan* furnishes these kind of men, and with what success he furthers their designs: which if those men would more advisedly weigh, who judge reproaches to be of such force to preserve the purity of doctrine, they would, haply, be less delighted with them then they are. In a word, as I deny not, but that sometime, sharp reproofs ought to take place, so I Avouch, that all those conditions do very seldom concur which are requisite, that they may be in the least measure beneficial. And to pass over the consideration of their profit, a great and wonderful is that, which *Jude* in his Epistle mentions, that *Michael* the *Archangel* contending about the body of *Moses*, durst not rail upon *Satan* himself, but desired God to rebuke him. What hare-braind men are we! how much greater things dare we not only against *Satan* (which yet were a great arrogance, to take more liberty then the *Archangel* thought fit to use) but against men, it may be no less dear to God then we our selves are. Would we but weigh this one example, and then consider, what liberty we use in mutual reproaches; verily, that man mu't be very blind, that sees not, how that this same custom of evil-speaking comes from no other spirit, but that of the Devil. But, forasmuch as we have declared, that what ever we do upon the report of some Error spread abroad, we ought to consider the end we ought to aime at in every thing, and that we ought among other things, to endeavor that the party erring may be drawn from his Error; to which purpose bad language and insultations profit not, but rather do very much hurt; let us now make enquiry, what is most fit to be done in such a case.

Now there are two things requisite to reduce a person erring from his Error; first, such demonstrations as may be of force with one of his judgment, to discover his error unto him; secondly, that he may weigh such demonstrations with a perfect and sound judgment. But if so be the demonstrations shal not be

be suited to a mans understanding, or he shal not weigh them, or in case he do, it shal be with a prejudiced and corrupted judgment, we shal miss of our intended scope. Further, his judgment shal then become sound and uncorrupt, when God shal have healed it with his spirit, and have rendred it capable of the truth; as also when it is not vexed with any jealousies or passions. Here therefore nothing is more to be avoided, then that we speak or do any thing which may wound his mind and estrange his affections; such are all words that may imply our bearing any ill-will towards him; such as may gall and accuse him of deceit, ignorance, impudence; or, in a word, any ways blast his reputation. We ought rather by all kind of humanity and respects, invite him to gentleness, moderation and goodwill; whereunto charity wil best instruct us, provided it be sincere, void of ostentation; which vertue whosoever is not assured that he is furnished with, let him not once meddle in this design til he have attained it. And if so be thou canst see nothing in the party that may deserve thy love, consider what there is in God and his only begotten son, whose workmanship he is, that may command thy affection. Were it not the pleasure of God that this man should live, either he should never have bin born, or presently expired upon his birth, or at least never have lived til this time: whereas now thou seest how God nourishes him, how he causes his sun to shine upon him as much as upon thy self, and how thousands of ways he makes him partaker of his liberality and goodness. Shal it then become thee who art the servant of this God, to be otherwise affected towards such an one? How knowest thou (as we said before) but this man may be a sheep of the Lords fold, which, how ever at present he wanders from the flock as one distracted, shal at length be found by that best of the shepherds, healed & brought back to the flock? And if the case be such, dost thou not discern our Lord himself, in the person of such an one, coming to the weak and sick to make tryal of thy love, which he intends to commemorate at the last day? And forasmuch as thou art not able to judg whether it be thus or no, it is enough for thee, that possibly he may be such an one; so that what ever kindness thou shalt shew him, the Lord may reckon it as done unto himself. Thou oughtest

not

not therefore to look upon his person, but upon the person of Christ: whom he represents, and to remember how great his love hath bin to thee: inasmuch as he refused not, being himself just and innocent, to dye for thee an unjust person, and the greatest of sinners, especially by so cruel and bloody a death. Oh, had we but the least suspicion concerning any man, that he should hereafter be a King, yea the best of Kings; suppose his present condition to be never so mean and obscure, how far would we be from condemning such a man? And what I pray you, is the dignity and sovereignty of a King, compared with that dignity and lustre which is laid up for Gods elect? And shall we account that man unworthy of our humanity and good wil, who, for ought we know, is born to this glory? Again, it will be very effectual to move thee to a gentle opinion concerning such a man, if entering into thine own heart, thou shalt take a diligent and strict survey of all thy actions, of thy whole life and cogitations, and examine them by the Law of God. And if so be thou shalt find thy self tainted in the presence of God with many and great sins, and yet dost comfort thy self, that he will not deal severely with thee, nor punish thee according to thy deserts, but rather carry himself towards thee, as a tender God and Father: why mayst thou not hope, that he shall be partaker of the like gentleness? And since, in regard of this hope of thine, thou lookest upon thy self, as one no ways to be despised; what reason is there, thou shouldst not judge the same of another? Further, with such meditations as these, we must ioyn frequent and fervent prayers to God, that he would soften our hearts, and would plant therein, with his own hand, a true and living charity, which wil direct us unto such apt and convenient ways of dealing with our brother, that it wil be a miracle if we do not shortly reclaim him. And whereas no man can understand the things of God but by the spirit of God; before we begin any dispute, let us wrastle with God by prayer, taking to our assistance some other godly persons, that he by his spirit would be present with the person erring, and open his heart and eyes, that he may acknowledg the truth; yea, and we ought to exhort him to make the like prayer to God in his own behalf.

As

As for demonstrations, they will be then available to manifest the truth, when God is their Author, as it is written; *I will instruct you with such a tongue and such wisdom, that no body shall be able to resist you.* And again, *as the rain and snow descend from heaven, and return not thither again, but do moisten and soften the earth, making it to bud, and bring forth, and yeeld bread to sustain the life of man; so my word that proceeds out of my mouth, shall not return to me fruitless, but shall accomplish all my will, & shall prosper towards those to whom I shall send it.* Here then we see that prayers are again necessary unto the Lord, that he would not only open the heart of the person erring, but also suggest to us such words as may be most fitting to demonstrate the truth. And if it shall not seem absurd to allow some place for such arts, which though they be termed humane; yet if a man shall no other ways use them, then as knowing that while he plants and waters, it must be God that can give the encrease, and putting all his confidence in him; no man can deny but they are the gifts of God: I shall further add, that those demonstrations have power to perswade, which taking their rise from things evidently known, and from such places of Scripture as are most clear and incapable of different interpretations, in a due order, and with a perpetual connexion; no medium being overpast or misplaced, do arrive unto the point in controversie; or else which shall begin at the Tenet to be disproved, and some other point out of all question, inferring by degrees, until such time as the party erring shall be brought to some great absurdity; which when by no means it can be maintained, it is impossible but the party dealt with shall confess; that somewhat untrue hath bin laid down, especially if this shall be done with words and expressions, noways obscure, doubtful, or intricate, but plain, clear and familiar. Howbeit (to say the truth) few there are, that can thus do, and the reason is, because there are very few, that had not far rather be writers and speakers than Meditators. Now it is not enough, if the argument which thou shalt bring, shall seem unto thee to the purpose, but it ought to be accommodated to the wit and judgment of him that is to be perswaded therewith. As for example: if thou haply shalt so prize the Authority of *Origen*, as to think thou oughtest to credit what

what ever he says, and shalt alleadg some place of his writings wherein he seems to take thy part, this may seem to thee, to make much on thy side; but if he with whom thou hast to deal, shal give little or no credit to *Origen*, this Testimony wil stand thee in no stead, and as little shalt thou prevail, if having to deal with a *Turk* or some other enemy to Christianity, thou shalt make use of Testimonies of Scripture. Thus likewise it will come to pass, if dealing with reasons, thou shalt take such things for grant, which, howbeit to thee they seem out of question, yet thy Adversary is not perswaded of their truth. For thou oughtest to assume such things as are true, not only in thine own, but in his account also. As if thou shalt say, we must not confess our sins to a Priest, because God hath not commanded it; and there stop: for he which doth not as yet know, or at least for the present remembers not, that we ought to observe nothing but what God himself shal command, wil not a whit be moved with that reason. There is a like, but more obscure passage in *Tullies* book called *Lalius*; the words are these. *Scipio* denied that any speech could be more contrary to friendship, then his that said, a man ought so to love, as remembering that he may hate where he loves; neither could he perswade himself, that (as it is believed) *Bias* should utter any such thing, who was accounted one of the seven wise men, but that it came from some base ambitious spirit, from a man that would reduce all things to his own power. For how is it possible any man should be his friend, to whom he conceives he may become an enemy? Yea, he must of necessity desire and wish that his friend may frequently offend; that he may give him the more occasions to reprehend him. Again, he must of necessity be vexed, greived and moved to envy, by the wel-doing and profit of his friends. So far *Laelius*. Now a man wil wonder how these absurdities should follow from the speech of *Bias*; whereas haply had the Argumentation bin compleat, all occasion of mervail would have bin taken away. And that thou mayst understand, what the way of prevailing in this case is, what reasons wil move thine Adversary, and what not, thou must be very wel acquainted with what he says and thinks; as also (beside the Controversie in hand) what other opinions he holds, what those things be whereof he is most certainly perswaded,

H

and

and what his judgment is. Now there is nothing so usual in disputes, as for to cavil at one anothers words, and to collect absurdities. Whence, for the most part, it comes to pass, that opposition is made, not so much against what is affirmed, but against what thou by a false interpretation hast feigned to thy self. Which kind of practise whereunto can it tend, but (as we have said) to provoke thine adversary to choler, to confirm his confidence and peremptoryness; and to open to thy self a window whereout to cast a thousand follies, not a jot to the matter in hand? Thus to do, is to imitate unskillful physicians, who little examine the nature of the disease; appoint remedies, nothing to the purpose, and instead of curing kill their Patients. Yet some men are exceedingly conceited of themselves, if mis-interpreting their adversaries words, they can infer some great absurdity therefrom. Howbeit, this custom ought to be left to vain *Sophisters*. In matters of this nature, of such weight and concernment, let it not be thy aime, that thou mayst seem to have confuted the error by hook or by crook, on any fashion; but let thy endeavour be to confute it indeed, and in truth, so as thine adversary may not have a word to say for himself, which thou shalt never accomplish unless thou give diligent heed, rightly to understand thine opposites words. And if so be he seem to utter somewhat that is very absurd, thou oughtest to be the more fearful, least thou mis-understand him, and rather to desire him to explain his meaning; then to fall upon the bones of the absurdity, when thou art not yet certain, that it is thine adversaries meaning. And when the controversie is managed face to face, herein commonly is the grand miscarriage, that a man periwades himself he can at the first word, divine what his adversary would say, before he hear him out, and would be presently at the Answer: whence it comes to pass that clamours are raised, choler is moved, and all the labour is lost. Away then with this rash forecasting, and let us stay til our time come to Answer. Others when they have produced an Argument, will need triumph before the Victory, not able to stay til the other reply. Because they can see no way to avoid the dint of their Argument, they think surely, no body else can. Out upon such lightness! we cannot every man know all things. For supposing thou knowest

knowest more then I in all other matters, what wonder is it, if I haply know more then thou in this one point? What shalt thou get by this thine eigneess, saving to lay naked, like a fool, thine own Arrogance, Insolence and crabbed condition? If in worldly matters, Experience hath taught this proverbial Lesson.

....-*Et quandoquē bonus dormitat Homerus*

Ev'n honest Homer's sometimes napping took.

And this

Sape etiam est stultus valde oportuna locutus:

A fool oft times to purpose speaks.

what shal we think in matters divine, of which the truth it self thus speaks; That it hath pleased his heavenly father, to hide his secrets from the wise, and to reveal them to babes and sucking Children? Now we find by experience, that if thine adversary observe that thou understandest his meaning, what he holds, and by what reasons he is induced so to think, and shal see thee notwithstanding, ready to contradict and oppose him; it wil be almost impossible, but he wil abate much of his confidence. He was formerly perswaded, that in case his fancies were rightly understood, every one would assent unto them; but now when he sees him that understands them, refusing to give his assent, he cannot chuse, but wonder. Which what else is it, but to make some kind of doubt, least his Tenets be not so sound as they ought to be? Hereupon likewise he is inflamed with a desire to know what it is thou hast to object, which desire hath made him fit to understand thee, and being come so far, the business is wel-near accomplished. My judgment therefore is in overthrowing an Error, that the chief labour ought to be rightly, to understand what is affirmed, according to the meaning of him that spake the words; not how thou by a crafty civill mayst interpret the speech: yea rather, if any violence should be offered to the words, I would much rather they should be drawn to serve the purpose of the speaker, then to any other intent. Among other faults committed by mis-understanding our adversaries words; this is a frequent one, when we thus reason with our selves; if it were as that man affirms, this and that would thereof follow, and then look what inferences we make in our own understandings, we attribute them unto our

H 2

adversaries,

Adversaries, and waste away the time in consulting such things, as they peradventure never once so much as thought of, whereby we do both provoke them, and render our selves ridiculous; which the better to understand, this example may be of use. Because the Papists say, that sins committed after baptism, must either be expiated with good works by us wrought, or after death, by the fire of Purgatory; if we shall thus infer; If it be necessary that any sins be expiated, either by our doings or sufferings, then Christ hath not taken them away, and then he hath not performed what he came into the world for, *viz.* to abolish the works of the Devil, and therefore shall say that the Papists deny that Christ did that he came into the world to do: we shall so far say true, inasmuch as they do in some sort deny that Christ hath done, what he came into the world for, because it follows from what they hold; yet shall not our saying be punctually true, inasmuch as they do not expressly say so, and it may be, think not so neither. So that if we shall proceed with many words to blame them for such collections, as if they were their positions, they will say that we are mad. What shall we do then in this Case? Report what they say without addition, diminution or alteration. And if so be absurdities shall follow from their words, they are to be collected only to this end, that it may appear, that what they hold is false. Such ingenuity is amiable what ever thing be controverted; as for the Disciples of Christ reasoning about matters Divine, no ornament in the world can more become them.

Furthermore, Desire of Conquest ought to be banished from all Christian disputes: let all thy care be, that truth may overcome; neither let it concern thee, whether she be discovered by thee or some other man; perswade thy self that thy reputation shall be sufficiently provided for, in case God may have that honour which is due to him; which is much advanced, when Truth is rescued and vindicated from Imposture. Wherefore, in case it fall out, that by means of the dispute, thou come to know that thou wast ignorant of before; beware thou shame not to acknowledg it; never care who it is thou must give way unto. Know thou, that it is a most honourable thing to be taught of God, be it by what instrument soever. Let them be
ashamed

ashamed that wil not learn. If thou art ashamed of him, whom God shal use as his instrument, assure thy self, it is not man but God whom thou contemnest, whose severe vengeance thou shalt not escape, unless with a reverent mind thou embrace his proffered favour. And to the end thou mayst do this the more easily, when occasion shal require, it wil be much to the purpose, if thou shalt avoid such things as encrease the difficulty to practise the same; such as these: to averr any thing with great confidence, so as often to protest that thou wilt account it a great offence, an heinous crime, yea meer madness for any man to contradict thee; to call him a block that cannot understand it, and the like. For it wil after ward seem very grievous, to appear to have shot so wide of the mark; so that it is far better to speak warily at all times, not so as to seem always to doubt (for that were not commendable) but barely to affirm what thou conceivest to be the truth, and in like manner to deny such things, as thou conceivest to be false, and to alleadg Arguments and Testimonies, on the one side or on the other: only abstain from such expressions as these; what an impious thing is this? What rashness? What impudence to affirm so or so, and the like. The *Mathematicians* use most sure demonstrations and infallible, yet shal you never hear them utter such a word; for such speeches add nothing to the certainty and cleareness of the demonstrations. If it may be free for us to assent unto the Truth, when ever it shal be made known unto us, and to imbrace a more true opinion, then what for the present we hold, why should we by means of such rash speeches bind our selves, as it were by a Law, with great obstinacy to adhere unto a false one? Pertinent hereunto seems that advice of *Solomon*. Take heed thou intangle not thy self in contention, least proving over weak thou be ashamed, and at a *non-plus*. And forasmuch as we cannot know what things those are wherein we err, that in speaking of them our discourse may be circumspect, as it ought to be in such matters, we shal never use this caution when there is need, unless we shal accustom our selves, what ever matter we reason about, to avoid such kind of expressions, as most dangerous rocks. Again, the aforesaid difficulty is much increased, if we shal greatly despise our Adversary; so that it wil be much more civil and discreet,

with whomsoever we have to deal, to contain our selves within the bounds of modesty; and to abstain from all signification of contempt. And forasmuch, as do what we can, we shall hardly obtain the power, to seem vanquished without great reluctance, we ought to arm our minds against this assault, as firmly as we can, with some prevalent reason, by frequent meditation, deeply imprinted in our mind; nor do I know any more forcible then this; to call to mind, that this whole life, of ours, lasts but for a moment, being like a stage-play, where Princes, Kings, Serving-men, Ladies, Waiting-women are brought upon the stage; when the play is done, the players casting aside those persons they acted, are either all equals; or he peradventure which was King of the play, is now of a more base condition, then he that plaid the part of a servant. Now in case some one of the players should find himself much agrieved to act that part which seems dishonourable; and had rather offend him, by whose favour he shall be raised out of the dust, and by whose displeasure he shall become miserable all his life time; will not all men account him out of his wits, who shall prize more the vain ostentation of an hour, then so many commodities of life? And is there not here the same or far greater madness? Be thou the Conqueror or Conquered, how long wil the glory or the disgrace endure? And in case thou shalt wittingly oppose the Truth, and by so doing shalt make God thine Enemy, what wil become of thee, wretched man that thou art? By thy obstinacy it may fall out, that the Truth shall remain oppressed, and an innumerable company of people by this means perish; which wil be so many accusers against thee at the last day. Who would not tremble every joynt to think of this? Away then with all such kind of peremptoriness, and let every man resolve with himself, to make no account of his own reputation in this case, but to make it his whole desire that in all disputes Christ may have the better: neither let him care to become the off-scouring of the world, so that in all things the name of God may be honoured. Thou art nettled perhaps, that he should get the victory, whom peradventure thou didst ere while highly esteem in comparison of thy self. And is it so indeed? Hast not thou another much greater combat with *Satan*? He hath singled thee out,

as it were a certain Fort, which by all engines and endeavours he wil endeavour to Conquer: and thou standest upon thy guard. Now if so be thou shalt oppose the Truth known, through the pride of thy mind; Shalt thou not dishonourably surrender thy self unto thine enemy, to such an enemy? Shalt thou not betray thy Fort: And this in the sight of thy general, from whom nothing is hid? Is there nothing in this case, that may vex and afflict thy mind? Consider again and again the choyce thou art put unto. There is a double fight in which thou art ingaged, thou canst not in both be Conqueror. If thou art resolved to become victor on that side, by the oppression of Truth, most sure it is, thou shalt be overcome in this other duel with *Satan*. But if so be thou canst not be content to be vanquished here, of necessity thou must strike sail, and submit thy self in the former. Which, that thou mayst do with a more contented mind, consider with thy self, that thy giving way, wil not seem so shameful to others, as it doth unto thy self: for who knows not, that nothing is more proper to mankind then to err? And that in every Controversy it is expected, that the one side wil be vanquished? So that it wil not be much wondered at, if thou shalt be overcome rather then thy adversary: and though it be a disgrace to be vanquished, yet is it a thing very praise-worthy, and that which is apt to procure great goodwill from all good persons, if thou shalt be so ingenious, as willingly to give place to the Truth, being once manifested. So that in case any loss be sustained in respect of thy fame and reputation, in point of learning, it shal be abundantly recompenced with the commendation of thy goodness; which thou mayst easily understand to be of more worth of the two; forasmuch as every man abhors a wicked person, how learned soever he seems to be; whereas all men account a good man, though void of all learning, worthy both of Love and Honour. Neither oughtest thou to perswade thy self, that it wil not be known thou art vanquished, unless thou thy self give ground: yea rather, by how much the more thou shalt struggle, by so much the more wilt thou discover thy stiffneckedness and baseness, and give thine adversary the more occasion to publish the same, and give the more occasion to many speeches, which wil not make much for thy reputation. So that
in

in the Conclusion, thou shalt neither be able to maintain the reputation of thy learning, nor chuse but to undergo the hateful censure of perverseness and obstinacy. If thou shalt frequently meditate on such things as these; it wil be a miracle if the inbred impotency of thy mind be not much abated; So as thou shalt be able to suffer the Truth to overcome, with a contented mind, when occasion shal require.

And forasmuch as it is very hard in disputes, both not to be provoked, and not to provoke; we must labour by such meditations as these, like as it were by certain medicines, to prepare our mind, that we may not be overtaken with such miscarriages. Wherefore when thou art to enter into a dispute, thou oughtest to imitate a valiant and wary Champion, that is to fight in single combat: for he wil bethink himself of all the severall Arts of striking & thrusting, and wil study how to defend himself against every one. He wil likewise consider what parts of his body are worst armed, and in which parts a wound wil prove most dangerous, thereby to use the greater care in their defence. Moreover, he wil whet his mind to the combat, and resolve either to vanquish his adversary, or valiantly to lose his life. So oughtest thou to think with thy self, and let before thine eyes what ever may happen at thy dispute, which may enflame thy mind with anger, darken thine understanding, and fill thee with perturbations; as that thine adversary may reproach thee, that he may charge thee to deal impiously, impudently or wickedly; that he may term thee a silly ignorant fellow, a block, a sot; that he may basely deride thee; that he wil cavil and wrest thy words; in brief, that he wil use thee with all kind of insolence, and yet must thou resolve with thy self, not to be moved at any thing, but rather with all gentleness and patience to persist to the end. Hast thou Nobility or wealth, Authority or Reputation, or any other thing which may make thee think highly of thy self, make account that on that part thou art unarmed, liable to injury; and that there, if thou takest not heed, thou shalt be wounded. And thy way of defending thy self, is to understand that these are no other then *Satans* weapons, wherewith he wil fight against thee; which wil then want all power of hurting thee, when thou shalt perfectly understand what vain and empty things

things they are. This one thing ought to be engraven in thine heart, that thou hast not to deal with the man, with whom thou must dispute, but with *Satan* himself, and that the *main quarrel* is not that point about which thou shalt argue, but many more matters, and of greater concernment. How that *Satan's* aime is from one contention to raise infinite, to enflame mens minds with wrarh, to rend the Church into Sects, to stir up seditions, and erect Tyrannies: in a word that he aimes at nothing but mighty combustions and devastations. And that therefore, he wil not bring upon the stage one contentious person or two, but very many, each more wayward then other, more obstinate, more seditious. And that the top of his design, is not to darken the point in question (for that is the smallest thing he aimes at) but much more to vanquish thy patience, which being vanquished, he may easily obtain his other ends. Go to then, what is the duty of a good Souldier in this case? To be white-liver'd? To be wearied out? To give ground to the Enemy? By no means in the world: but by how much the more eagerly and fiercely he sets upon thee, by so much the more do thou call thy wits about thee, and buckle thy self to fight against him. Which thou oughtest to do with the more alacrity, forasmuch as the *Apostle James* gives us most certain hope of victory; where he says, *if we shal resist the Devil, he wil fly from us.* Oh that this one thing were wel rooted in our minds, that what ever Controversie be agitated, we have not to do with him that moves it, and that the Controversie is not about one point of Religion, but that thereby *Satan* seeks occasion to raise contentions, sects, brawles, combustions, and the subversion of the Kingdom of Christ, of the Common-wealth of Christians. Of what force would this one consideration be towards the mollifying our minds, and the composing us more and more to gentleness, and a quiet and circumspect manner of disputation! Now among other things which make a disputant very froward, Arrogance challenges the first place, if thou shalt think thou knowest all things, and contemn every body else in comparison of thy self. Which humour is often augmented by wealth, Magistracy, great benefices, reputation, and other things of like Nature. With which perswasion, if thy mind shal be besotted, thou shalt

I

shalt not be able to suffer any man to speak one whole sentence, ere his mouth be wel open; thou wilt suppose thou sufficiently understandest what he was about to say, and what he might have further added. And with one word, with one word say I? Yea rather with one lugh, one wry look, one gesture or other, thou wilt imagine thou hast abundantly confuted him: and whatsoever thou shalt affirm or deny, if any one shal be so hardy, as to matter any thing to the contrary, he shal be accounted guilty of high Treason and Sacriledg. Thy Adversary in the mean time, wil be so far from being reclaimed from his Error, that thereunto great indignation wil be joyned, and a firm purpose to maintain his Tenets with whomsoever he can, since he cannot in thy presence; and if he may not openly, at least privily, to divulge them far and near: which disease is exceeding hard to be prevented. For as any man is high in Authority, and speaks from a more elevated place, he conceives he ought to seem in like manner wiser then others, and would commonly, that his Authority should serve in stead of Reason. Howbeit, we must oppose this mischief, from whence almost infinite evils arise, and they very destructive. And first of all, thou must often think, how silly a thing it is, if either thou wallow in wealth, from thy riches; if thou art a Magistrate from thy Magistracy; if thou hast Benefice from thy Living; or if thou art a Gentleman from thy Gentility, to Arrogate unto thy self any wisdom or knowledg. Of what kin is wisdom to any of these things? The whole world wil tel thee, that unless thou hast Wit, unless thou hast had Teachers, unless thou hast undergone long and diligent pains, those things cannot avail thee. And for reputation, what is it but the Testimony of the Multitude? A goodly witness of thy sufficiency, which sometimes it self, is little less then stark mad! But if thou wilt give eare to him that only cannot deceive, nor be deceived, thou wilt find neither wit nor study, nor teachers to be any thing, but that all rests in the Spirit of God alone. So that if he only shal afford thee plentiful assistance, though thou shalt have no help besides, thou canst not but be exactly wise; if he alone shal be wanting, thou canst not chuse but be an Arrant fool, however furnished with abundance of all other assistance. Why then should these empty names blow thee up? Verily, inasmuch

as nature without any external assistance, flatters every man more then enough, and makes him think himself very wise, we must take heed, least that by a foolish relying upon such things, our natural infirmity be encreased. And whereas if we consider the other faults of mans nature, we shal find them all to be deep-rooted, and hard to be, I wil not say rooted up, but even in part lopped off, and diminished. I am yet of opiaion, that if Arrogance be compared with the rest, they wil appear to be very loose, and removeable in comparison; for if thou shalt be inflamed with anger, if thou conceive hatred, if thou steal, if thou kil; thou canst not but know that thou committest these crimes; so that if thou shalt often commit such acts, thou canst not but know, that thy mind is inclined to hatred, theft, blood-shed; and mayst try the mastery with thy self, and by little and little, endeavour to attain to better dispositions and manners: but in case thou shalt be possessed with too great a conceit of thine own wisdom, it wil be as hard for thee to be perswaded, that thou dost so err. For if in any point thou shalt err, it wil be as hard a thing while thou erreth, to make thee understand that thou dost err, as to make thee live and not to live, at one and the same instant; for to err, and to acknowledg thine Error, were the same, as to err, and not to err. It may come to pass indeed, that after thou hast remained for a time in thine Error, thou mayst repent and acknowledg the same. But God knows how few Errors come to be acknowledged by those that err. And concerning those few Errors which we acknowledg, that self-love which is bred in our bone, is never wanting of an excuse; so that every man wil lay the fault any where, rather then in his own judgment, whence it comes to pass, that he cannot discern how he Attrogates unto himself, more then is meet: and forasmuch as the disease is hidden, the medicine is not so much as sought after. And truly in this case, I cannot see what other way any good is to be done, but by that course we formerly mentioned, which, because it ought to be deeply imprinted in our minds, it must not seem irksome to make repetition thereof in this place: And that was this. Since we see, that all the affairs of mans life are full of dissensions, in things divine and profane, publique and private, in peace and war, at home and abroad,

and yet there is but one Truth in all things; of necessity, very many must err. And forasmuch as for the most part, those that are judged to excel others in wisdom, are at difference among themselves; it must be concluded, that many also of those that are accounted wise, do err. And inasmuch as one man errs in one thing, another in another, and therefore those things in which every man errs, must needs be many; and because none so excels in wisdom, but he may be subject to humane frailty, when he least suspects himself; Reason thus with thy self; all other men err, and that frequently; and it cannot betide a very wise man of exact judgment to err often: there is not therefore, a man who hath attained to so great wisdom, but that he comes far short of the top, and yet there is no man but attributes very much unto himself, and in so doing, is exceedingly mistaken in his opinion. What therefore wilt thou judge of thy self? Wilt thou not thus think? I am a man too; that therefore which is so proper to man, must of necessity be in mee too, though I observe it not, that so thou mayst labour to weaken the force of thine Arrogance. But there is in man a kind, of I know not what spirit, an egregious flatterer, and very crafty, which in the midst of such meditations as these, mutters I know not what in his heart, which he doth in such a manner, as that his speech is more moving, affecting, and intoxicating, then discernable. Yet if thou canst reach his meaning, thou shalt find he speaks to this effect: true indeed it is, there is no man but is deceived in attributing too much unto himself, howbeit this Arrogance is far from thee, thy case is far different, who art led by a special instinct, which wil not suffer thee to mistake in judging. And so great is the force of this enchantment, that though thou shalt strive long and earnestly with thy self, yet shalt thou hardly be able to lay down any little portion of this vain persuasion. But of this thou oughtest to be certainly perswaded, that by how much the less thou suspectest thy self of Arrogance, by so much the more Arrogant thou art, for whilst thou thinkest wel of thy self, the wise King *Solomon* reckons thee amongst the number of fools. *A fool (says he) is pleased with his own reasonings, but a wise man seeks Counsel.* So that the top of humane wisdom seems to be, for a man to suspect his own wisdom, and to know

know that he stands in need of the Counsel of another. Which Text verily ought continually to be opposed against that most wicked spirit, that he may not estrange thy mind from modesty.

And that thou mayst the better understand, that modesty is altogether necessary in disputes; I wil add one thing, which at the first view, may seem very absurd, though nothing in the world is more certainly true: whosoever thou art, thou canst not maintain a Controversie with any man about any point, but that, look by how much thou thinkest thy self wiser then hee, by so much on the other side, will he think himself to be wiser then thou. The reason is at hand; for if thou consider the point in Controversy, did but he think that thou couldst judg better then himself, he would assent unto thee, and there would remain no difference. But inasmuch as he dissents from thee, he must needs conceive himself to judg better, in other things haply, he may seem to prefer thee before himself; but he doth not do it indeed, and in Truth: for if each of you shal reckon up his opinions, in such points wherein you shal both agree, he wil approve his own judgment as much as thine, and in such, wherein he shal differ from thee, he wil questionless prefer his own judgment before thine, and so wil take himself to be the wiser of the two. This is most manifest in our passing of our judgment concerning writers. For, so far thou wilt praise any Author, as he shal satisfie thy judgment, and so far thou wilt dislike him, as he shal not content thee; so that every mans rule, whereby he measures what is right or wrong, is his own judgment. Which being so, who ever the Controversie be with, suppose he be the most ignorant fellow in the world, and suppose thou takest thy self to be one that can speak Oracles; look how ill thou canst bear it, to be contemned by him, as ill wil he take it, to be contemned by thee; and peradventure he will take it so much the worse, by how much he hath bin less ingenuously brought up. Shal I tel thee in a word, how thou oughtest to deal with him, so as to avoid bitterness? Imagine the case to be quite contrary; suppose him to be such an one as thou takest thy self to be; thy self to be such as thou deemest him, and then look what behaviour of thine would become each of you,

if the case so stood, endeavour with all thy might to expels. If thou shalt not thus do, a thousand to one, thou shalt not avoid, insolently to carry thy self. Whosoever shall daily meditate of these things, and carefully exercise his mind in the practise of them; he doubtless (if I am not mistaken) shall become an excellent disputant, very fit by way of reasoning, to resist the growth of Errors. Of which way of resistance by Reason, seeing we have sufficiently treated; we are in the next place to speak of Authority.

Satans Cabinet Counsel.

The Third Book.

The Argument.

WHat Course a Church of Christ may take, to resist the spreading of false Doctrine. Great care is to be had, no person or Doctrine be unjustly condemned. Small Errors ought not to be so severely censured as greater. Most men account but a patron of Errors; that will not make a Mountain of a Mole-hill. Of what ill Consequence it is to account a point to be fundamental, and necessary to be known to salvation, when it is not such. The truth of a point one thing, the weight and consequence thereof another. Scriptures asserting the truth, do not consequently assert the weight of a point. The Scriptures can only declare the weight of a point, and how we are to improve them to that end. Whether in case it appear, that such or such a thing must needs be so or so it follow, that that thing must needs be known to salvation? In Case it appear from Scripture, that a Point ought of necessity be known to salvation, whether are all truths following therefrom, of like necessity to be known and acknowledged? A man may firmly hold a position, and deny such things as necessarily follow therefrom, so long as he shall not discover the necessity of such Consequences. What Points are in the Scriptures held forth, as of necessity

necessity to be known and believed to salvation? Men may be saved, though they mis-understand some points, and hold some Errors. It is very remarkable, that our Lord gave the tokens of his body and blood to his Disciples, when as yet they knew not that his Kingdom was a spiritual Kingdom, nor yet that the Gentiles should be saved by him, and that in a peculiar sort before the Jews. An enumeration of such points as the Scriptures account needful to be known and believed to salvation, and of such as to the ignorance whereof damnation is threatened. What points they be which following from the former, by way of consequence, are likewise needful to be known. In all other differences, we are to hold a brotherly peace and union. It is needless, and endless to reckon up such points as are not necessarily to be known to salvation. To believe a point, is not to repeat the words, but to embrace the sense of them. Of what moment that Controversie is, between the Lutherans and Calvinists (as they are termed) about the presence of Christs body in the Sacrament, whether the erring party, err damnably. Before we condemn any man for an Error, we must be very well assured, that it is such an Error, as deprives of salvation. Many points held necessary to be known to salvation, which cannot by any Text of Scripture be proved to be such. What did the believing thief, the Eunuch baptized by Philip, the harlot that washed our Lords feet, the Palsied person that was healed, know and believe concerning Christ? A person that errs damnably, and cannot be reclaimed, ought to be excluded a Christian Congregation, whether he promise not to seduce, or do not so promise. He that errs in a point not fundamental, if after admonition he cease not by spreading his Error to trouble the Church, he ought to be cast out. He that errs an Error not damnable, and makes no stirr by seducing, must be retained in Communion. All means must be used to reduce a person that errs fundamentally, before he be cut off from Communion of the Church. Care must be taken, that they Arrogate not unto themselves the judgment of any doctrine or person, to whom it belongs not in such cases to judge. It belongs to the whole Church to judge in such a Case. What the Magistrate may do to resist Errors. When it is once grown in use, to determine Controversies by the sword, what ever Doctrine comes to be the Doctrine of the major part, and stronger side, who ever shall oppose the same, will be

be counted an Heretick, and all his Arguments and Scriptures produced, shal be answered by none but the Hangman. Better never any Heretick be punished by the sword, then such a door set open to the bloodshed of professors of the Truth. Putting Hereticks to death, instead of suppressing, oft times encreases them. Pastors are thereby made lazy and unlearned, and to lose the use of their spiritual Weapons. Afflicting Hereticks, hardens them in their Errors, because afflicting is the portion of those that profess the Truth. Of putting a seducer to death under the old Testament, and of the beating down the City that falls to Idolatry. Of the reason of that Law, that all Israel may fear, and do no more so. The Parable of the Tares discussed. It cannot be understood of Adulterers, Thieves and such like offenders. It must be understood of false Teachers. We cannot justify the breach of a manifest Universal Law against bloodshed, by our interpretations of an obscure, particular Command. Great difference between an Heretick and an Apostate, from the true God and true Religion. The Magistrate cannot doubt of a mans being an Apostate, in case he be, but of his being an Heretick, he may wel doubt. Few Magistrates able to judg of an Heretick. Who ever bears the sword, wil be thought to hold the Truth, and all that are contrary-minded must be Hereticks. The Magistrate greatly concerned to examine what his duty is in this point. Wherein the danger lies, that if the tares be pluckt up, the wheat also should be pluckt up. He that cannot judg who is an Heretick, cannot determine what Doctrine is Heresie.

LIB. III.

HAVING divided the Authority, whereby false Tenets are opposed into that of the Church, and that other of the civill Magistrate: we shal first speak of the Church. If therefore any one shal teach such things as are not agreeable to the Word of God, to the end such Doctrines may not prevail; two things the Church may do; damn the Doctrine as erroneous and impious; and cut off the person from the body of the Church, as a withered branch; in which proceedings there may be a triple Error

Error committed. First, if any Doctrine or person be unjustly condemned; secondly, if they be otherwise condemned then stands with justice; thirdly, if they be condemned by other persons then they ought to be. In the first place, any thing is unjustly condemned, if it be not false; which Error how to avoid, may be known by what hath bin said in our first book. Again, a matter is unjustly condemned, if the sentence be more grievous then the matter requires, which is in Controversie. For all points of true Doctrine are not of one kind. Some are so necessary to be known, as that all ought to hold them firm and undoubted. Others here are which being controverted between Church and Church, do not break the unity of Faith. Now in case an Error of this kind shal be so sentenced, as if it bereft the persons erring of all hope of salvation, the judgment wil not be right. Here we are to consider, whether it make any matter in such Cases, to give just or unjust sentence. Most men, if thou shalt not account every Error to be of the largest size, they wil say thou maintainest Errors, that thou art a patron of erroneous persons; whose godly care to preserve the purity of Doctrine, truly I commend: notwithstanding, I conceive it wil be labour wel bestowed, to examine more surely, whether in so doing a man be indeed a patronizer of Errors. Doubtless, concerning any point, every man inclines either to the negative or affirmative, to the one side or other, or he is in doubt concerning that point. Now he that doubts, if he shal be perswaded, that in case of Error, there is certain danger of damnation, though there be not, he wil be dejected in his mind, which dejection is so far from assisting his mind in right judging, that it exceedingly hinders the same. For every perturbation of mind, weakens the iudgment, and casts a mist before the Soul; and is ever joyned with a distrust of Gods mercy to the party, then which, what can less conduce to salvation? Yea rather, what doth more hinder? What a door is thereby opened for *Satan*, to overthrow all the miserable mans hope, and cast very many pernicious thoughts into his mind? I confels, it is possible that a mind so dejected, may lift it self up to God, and both implore and obtain his assistance, for to come to a sure knowledge of the Truth. But though this may befall some, who can deny but that it may betide some,

as we said before, to Forcing those that have attained to know
 that I wish the point being, as we make the supposition, not of
 necessity to be known, they are not delivered from any very
 great danger; but those that have occasion to distrust the mercy
 of God towards them, their salvation is in very great danger.
 Whence it follows, that such as doubt of any point, are more
 harmed, in case they shall judge that necessary to be known, which
 is not; then if they shall esteem it to be of no greater weight than
 indeed it is. And he which is perswaded of the Truth of such a point,
 though he take the false party, he conceives he shall offend God,
 if he shall not endeavour, as much as in him lies, to perswade all
 others of the Truth of that which he conceives himself to under-
 stand; and therefore he will endeavour to do it publicly, if he
 may be suffered, at least, he cannot but do his best privately,
 which he would never go about, or to be sure, not with so much
 earnestness, if he did esteem the thing to be of less moment.
 Now, for such in whom an Error hath taken root; what is there
 that can so hinder them from being reclaimed, as to think that
 they cannot change their judgment without loss of their Salva-
 tion. Therefore it is, that they dare not hear him that would
 teach them better. And refusing so to do, what way is left to
 reduce them? Such as think aright, I confess, by how much
 greater weight they conceive any point to be of, will so much
 the more unwillingly give ear to any that shall call their judg-
 ment into question. But in case the matter shall be of less con-
 sequence, then they suppose, herein their mistake will be very fur-
 nible; in that they will separate the parties for erring, from the
 rest of the body of Christ, to wit the Church; will condemn them,
 will hold them accursed: and they will be forced to make a sect
 by themselves, then which nothing can be more destructive.
 For we see what deadly enmity is between sects. And hatred
 is the cause, that whatever is affirmed by one sect, is apt to be
 suspected by the opposite sect, and to be contradicted. And
 whatsoever hath rashly bin uttered, base pride, and affectation
 of Superiority, will not suffer it to be retracted, but will have
 it with all pertinacy maintained. And what once is grown
 into a custom, that for every difference of judgment, one man
 will condemn another, you shall see sects spring out of sects daily;
 which

which multitude of sects, out of a desire to find the Truth, hath occasioned very many men to throw aside all thought of Religion. So that if any man do seriously weigh, how much the multitude of sects do hinder the course of the Gospel, together with the hatreds and dissensions that are between them, he will easily understand, that nothing can be more accommodated to the Counsels of *Satan*, then such rash judgments, from whence the sects arise. It is far better to esteem everything by its just value, and neither to increase nor diminish the same, which resolution is the more to be prized, inasmuch as Christ himself, being the only maintainer of pure Doctrine, needs not the assistance of any false persuasion to that effect; for what defence can a lie afford? The matter then thus standing, we must in the next place enquire after some way, so to ballance and poise the weight and consequence of matters, as that we may not err in this case.

Now in the first place, this ought to be layd down for a sure rule; that if we shall depart from the Divine Oracles, contained in the holy Scriptures, there is nothing whereto we may safely trust; there is nothing but what is liable, either to stand or fall: Gods Testimonies are only sure, they only are of that worth, that the Conscience of a man may rest upon them, and quiet it self. And doubtless, if there shall be such a Controversy about any point of Religion, as that some shall say, it is a point so necessary to be resolved about, and so known the Truth of, as that he which shall not understand and close with it, cannot be saved possibly; others, though they are of the same judgment, for the point it self, shall yet deny, that it is of such weight, and rather conceive that such as judge a mans there being, may attain salvation, and ought notwithstanding to be reputed members of the Church: In case (I say) such a Controversie arise, when both sides cannot be said to judge according to Truth, the one or other must of necessity err. Wherefore, to be certainly informed, which party thinks right, will be to know somewhat, even as, to be assailed and doubt therein, will be to be ignorant of somewhat: whence it must be concluded, that we cannot come to certain knowledge in this point, unless there be some word of God extant to guide us. Now we must be sure to mark in this

place, that a point of Religion, and the judgment which is made concerning the weight and consequence of that point, are very different things. As it is one thing to say; A Christian ought not to be Circumcised; another thing to say, if ye be Circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For he which had heard, how that a Christian must not be Circumcised; might yet think, that though a Christian should not be Circumcised, yet if a man iudg that he ought to be Circumcised, it were not much material. But having heard that other word; If you be Circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing, he wil now understand the matter to be of far greater importance. And inasmuch as a Doctrine is one thing, and the iudgment and estimation of the weight of that Doctrine is another; if it shall be put to the question, concerning any Tenet, whether or no it be a point which ought of necessity to be known; as for example, *that it is lawful to swear before the Iudg*; it wil be nothing to the purpose, for a man to bring many Texts to prove, that an oath in point of iudicature, ought not to be refused; for it wil be said by one or other, that I grant, neither do I any ways make scruple thereof, but I would be resolved concerning the weight of the thing, whether it be a matter of such consequence, as that, in case any man shall be perswaded, that he ought not in any case to swear, and shall remain in that Error, there is no hope of his salvation. So that such proofs are in this case requisite, not which evince, that a man ought to swear before the Bench (for that is not the thing in question) but which prove, that he which is perswaded he ought not to swear, shall be damned, such as there is concerning the not retaining of Circumcision.

Now a point is then to be accounted proved by divine Testimony, when the Testimony or Text cannot be true, unless the point in question be true, which may come to pass, both when the Text shall contain the very thing, which it is brought to prove, as also when it shall lay down that, which being granted, the other must of necessity follow; as for example: we are to prove that a man is accounted just by believing, and not by the works of the Law, we alledg the words of Paul, *We iudg therefore, that by faith, a man is iustified without the works of the Law.* This Testimony expresses the very thing which we would

would prove. But suppose it were to be proved, *that a man is justified only by faith*, and one did thus reason: Unless there were only one way of Justification, and that by Faith; the Apostle had foolishly inferred, that forasmuch as *the just should live by faith*, and that works were not faith, therefore no man living is just by the works of the Law; but it cannot without great wickedness be charged upon the Apostle, that he reasoned foolishly: there is therefore righteousness in faith alone, and so a man is justified only by faith. Now this Testimony of Scripture, cannot be said to contain that which it is brought to prove, but yet it affirms such things as being granted, the point in question must needs follow. But if so be, that which is brought as a Testimony may be true, while the thing it is brought to prove may be false, that thing cannot be said to be proved by such a Testimony; so that, if a man to shew that the Pope hath Authority to make new Laws, wherewith to bind the Consciences of men, shal cite that place, *what ever thou shalt bind on earth, shal be bound in heaven*; it will be therefore denied, that that place proves the point in question, because power of binding might be given to Peter, and yet no power be given to the Pope to make new Laws.

Now a thing may be expressed, either by comprehension under general terms, or word for word; for when as the general term [Law] comprehends, as wel those Laws concerning Conversation, as those concerning religious Ceremonies; as wel Divine Laws, as Humane; that Christ shal not profit him, who shal place his Righteousness in keeping the moral Law; is in general terms comprehended in that speech of the Apostle, where he denys that they have any share in Christ, who place their Righteousness in the works of the Law. And that a man is justified by Faith, is in so many words comprehended, in that passage of the same Apostle. *We iudge therefore, that a man is justified by Faith, without the works of the Law.*

Furthermore, as concerning our present occasion; I find that one thing may follow from another, two manner of ways. One is, when a matter is laid down as necessary to be known, which cannot yet be understood and believed, unless some other thing shal be first understood and believed; for in such a case, the latter

it is to be reckoned among such things as are of necessity to be known. Thus; inasmuch as it is necessary, that we believe that Christ is risen from the dead, and we cannot believe that, unless we first likewise believe that he died, it is altogether necessary that we believe he died. The other way is this, if we find expressly set down, that a matter more doubtful than the point in question, whether it ought of necessity to be known, is to be known necessarily, yea if it be not less doubtful; for that which is less doubtful, or at least, not more doubtful, must be as necessary as the other.

But some may demand; whether in case it be apparent, that such a thing must needs be, or such a thing ought to have bin done, it ought therefore to be judged; that such a thing must necessarily be known by us. I wil explain my meaning by a comparison. Physicians cure him that is sick of an hot disease, by cooling medicines; neither is it any matter, though the Patient be ignorant of the faculties of such medicines, provided he make use of them. We in like manner were sick of a certain disease, being liable to death by sin; many things may be reckoned up, which that we might be saved, ought both to be, and to be performed; As that our sins were to be abolished, and that by a Man void of all sin, and of infinite vertue and power, and he therefore to be the son of God, yea God himself, and the like. But let us lay down among the rest, that it was altogether necessary that he should be accused, and in a judicial way, sentenced to just death. Some man (I say) may demand; whether or no, that, look how necessary it was, that our Lord should die, being condemned to death by a Judge; it should be as necessary for a man to know, not only that he died of any fashion, but as one accused, and judicially condemned: or whether we may not as well be ignorant of that circumstance, as a man sick of an hot disease, may, without prejudice, be ignorant of the faculty of such medicines as are administered unto him, as also whence, and how they were provided. Doubtless, that it may evidently appear to us, that these things are likewise necessarily to be known, either we must have a plain Text of Scripture that thus pronounce, *whatsoever is necessary to be done, that also (to attain salvation) must necessarily be believed;* or we must conclude, that because it

is said in Scripture, that such a thing was necessarily to be done; it therefore follows, that it must necessarily be known. But here is no Testimony of Scripture, that I know, which pronounces, that what ever ought to be done, ought to be believed; and whether or no, because a thing is pronounced necessary to be done; it therefore follows, that it must necessarily be believed; we may thus resolve our selves; suppose it is thus written in Scripture, It was altogether necessary for the taking away of the sins of men, that Christ should be condemned by the Judge, and so suffer death; if he had died otherwise, then in a judicial way, his death would not have profited mankind. Now some man would by this Testimony prove, that unless one believed that Christ suffered death, being condemned to die, he cannot be saved. The question therefore is, whether that Testimony do prove any such thing, or no. But it is apparent, that no such thing is by this Testimony proved; forasmuch as the Testimony may be true, while that which it is brought to prove it, is false; that speech which is contradictory to that which is to be proved, being not contradictory to that which is used as a Testimony. For, since it is one thing, that Christ ought to die in a judicial way; and another thing to believe, that he ought so to die; he that says, that man may be saved, who was ignorant that Christs death was in a judicial way, contradicts not him that says, it was necessary that Christ should die, being condemned; and there is nothing to hinder, but that both these propositions may be true. Which being so, we cannot conceive that this Testimony proves, that he which shall not believe that Christ died, being condemned in judgment, cannot be saved. Whence it follows, that to prove that something ought of necessity to be done, or to be, is no Argument that such a thing ought of necessity to be believed. And some may farther demand; whether in case it appear from Scripture, that a Doctrine ought of necessity to be known, we should account whatsoever may be collected from that Doctrine by necessary inference, to be in like manner needful to be known; in which case we must observe, that look how (as we said before) a Task is one thing, and the estimation of that Task is another thing; so it is one thing for a political Doctrine to follow from another policy, another thing for a speech to follow from a

expressing

expressing the weight of that Doctrine; now this latter kind of consequence, ought not to be doubted of. For since it is written, *Christ shall profit you nothing, who place your Righteousness in the Law*, and Circumcision is an Ordinance of that Law; if any one should say, that it is possible for him who places his Righteousness in Circumcision, to receive profit by Christ, he should contradict the very words of *Paul*. But our question is concerning such inferences as are the Consequences of some Doctrine it self, which ought of necessity to be known. Inasmuch therefore, as to grant the Antecedent and deny the Consequent, is to affirm contradictions; he which denys, that which necessarily follows from a Doctrine that ought to be known, he may not seem truly to believe the said Doctrine; and therefore not in a possibility of salvation. But I answer; seeing that I grant the Antecedent point which is necessary to be known, though I deny that which seemeth unto thee necessarily to follow therefrom; why shouldst thou not as well say, that I do not in truth deny, that which I seem to deny? Since (I say) to grant the Antecedent and deny the Consequent, cannot stand together; why should the denying of the Consequent rather seem a denying of the Antecedent, which I confess to be true, then the affirming of the Antecedent should seem to be an affirming of the Consequent, which I affirm to be false? for it is as true, that the affirming of the Antecedent affirms the Consequent, as it is, that the denial of the Consequent denies the Antecedent. Now it is clear, that he which understands that such a thing follows from such a thing, cannot possibly affirm the one, and deny the other. And if so be any man conceiving the Antecedent to be true, will not admit of the Consequence; the reason hereof is, that he doth not discern, that the one follows from the other; for, to see that this follows from that, and to account that true, and this false, were no other then to see it, and not to see it, which is impossible. Now that it may fall out, that what necessarily follows from some Tenet, may not by some men be discerned so to follow, is so certain as nothing more; for how many things are there, both in the *Mathematicks*, and other Arts, which being undeniably demonstrated to be true, are yet both unknown, and believed by many men, which understand not their

Demon-

Demonstrations. As for example, that the body of the Sun, is by many parts greater then the whole Earth. And if so be any man shal affirm things contrary to what are demonstrated, as that the Sun is greater then the Earth, he shal affirm things contrary to propositions, so evident and certain, as it is impossible any man should not understand them to be true, to wit, those maxims out of which the said things are demonstrated. But therefore it is, that those maxims to some men are evident and firm, who wil not believe such things as follow from them by necessary consequence; because they are not aware of that straight line and fit in connexion, which is between the said maxims and such things as follow therefrom; otherwise, since no man is ignorant of the truth of those principles, from whence the Demonstrations are raised, every body would know the truth of such things as might be demonstrated, and so we should have all men *Geometricians, Arithmeticians, all men Musicians and Astrologers*. And because it may fall out, that what follows from some other thing, may not be discerned by some man to follow the same; and he may therefore believe the former and not the latter; doubtless it is no proof, that because a man denies a necessary Consequence, he must therefore deny the Antecedent, being a point which ought of necessity to be known; especially, if he shal be so strongly perswaded of the truth of the Antecedent, that rather then he wil deny the same, he wil allow of the Consequent for Truth. But in case he would rather deny the Antecedent, then allow of the Consequent, the case is different: So to do, were at least not firmly to believe the Antecedent. It is manifest therefore, that such Testimonies of Scripture as prove, a point ought necessarily to be known, do not prove, that such things as necessarily follow, are of like necessity to be known. This part of our discourse is subtile and acute, requiring that the reader give great heed, to the end he may understand the same: howbeit, it is very necessary to be known, for the taking away of rash judgments, by means whereof the Church is torn in pieces into Sects.

These things being thus cleared, we are in the next place to enquire, what those points be, which are propounded unto us in the Scripture, as so necessary to be known and believed, that

he which shal not know and thoroughly understand them, ought not to be accounted one of Gods servants, or a member of his Church; and whosoever shal believe them, all may be judged capable of Salvation, though he very much err in all other points. Concerning which question, I would much rather hear the judgments of other men, then propound mine own to the rash, and haply, irreligious censures of many: howbeit, the hope of procuring the Tranquillity and peace of the Churches of Christ, hath more prevailed with me, then any private respect of mine own. We do not prescribe any thing to any man, as a decree, from which he may not dissent; but look what the Lord hath vouchsafed to discover unto us, we thought good in such wise to propound; as to be ready with a very good wil, to give credit, and place to him that shal propound matters of greater certainty. Our endeavour, truly, is not by all means possible, to obtrude our own judgment upon men, and to make, that it may be of authority; but rather that Truth it self may be brought to Light. For look as it often comes to pass, that a musician that could not be intreated by any means to play a lesson; if some unskillful person shal be his untoward fingering of some in-it-self, excellent Instrument, grate and vex his ears with his rude scraping, wil take the instruments in hand and begin to play: even so, our hope is, that in case we shal seem to have said little to the purpose, in a matter which, without all Controversie, is of the greatest moment that can be: we shal at the least, provoke some man of greater spirit and wisdom, to accomplish with good success, what we had unhappily undertaken. In the meantime, we do again & again beseech all pious and good men, that what ever they shal think of our judgment here delivered: they wil notwithstanding, take in good part our care to preserve peace and concord: and that not of any kind, but such as may become Christians, and that they wil joyn with me by fervent prayers, to beg of him who is the only Author, as of all other good things, so likewise of peace, that he would at the length bestow the same upon his Churches, to the praise and glory of his own name. Let us weigh then, and examine such places of Scripture, wherein Salvation is either promised or deayed, because of believing, or not believing.

Our Lord says: Be ye sure of this, he that hears my words, and believes in him that sent me, he shall enjoy eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death to life. Again, This is the will of him that sent me, that whosoever hath seen the Son, and hath believed on him, shall obtain eternal life. And again, Go ye through the whole world preaching the Gospel unto all: he that shall believe and be baptized, shall be saved, he that believes not shall be condemned. Which places, and their like, it may be questioned, how they ought to be understood: For some man will ask, what it is to believe in the Son of God or his Apostles: for even he doubtless believes, who is persuaded, that the person speaking ought to be credited, as one that speaks only the Truth, although he understand not what it is he says. In which sense there is no Christian, not one, but so far believes the word of God, as not to doubt, but whatsoever is contained therein is true: there is not, in the mean time, one perhaps, there never was, who understands the true sense of every place. Much more may that man be said to believe, who being persuaded of the Truth of the speaker, doth likewise understand that which he speaks. Now I conceive it is out of Controversie, that every man ought to hold for Truth, whatsoever the Son of God hath taught, either by himself or by his Apostles. For these things cannot stand together, that any man should believe, that Jesus is the Son of God; and not persuade himself, that whatever he says is true; and that he is adorned with all kinds of virtue. But whether or no it be likewise necessary to Salvation, to know whatever our Lord commanded as well in person, as by his Apostles, and rightly to understand the same; so as to embrace the same, not only with a confused, that is to say, a general, but with a distinct and particular faith; this is that which may be questioned.

Now it is altogether necessary, that either whatsoever things are set down in Scripture, are all necessary to be known; so that a man may not be ignorant of, or misunderstand any of them under pain of damnation; or that such things are of a different nature; so that some of them are altogether necessary to be known, and highly to be accounted of others; howbeit profitable to be understood, and such as are not ways to be slighted.

John 5.

John 6.

yet are they not altogether so necessary; yea rather, although there happen to be some Error concerning them, the person so erring may notwithstanding be saved. And our Lord himself professes, *that he teaches nothing, but such things as he had received from his father; and look what he had received from his Father, that he delivered to his Disciples, and that they embraced it, and did believe that he was sent from his Father: and therefore he prays for their salvation, and for the salvation of all those likewise, who should believe through their preaching.* And to the Apostles, this command was given; *Go ye through the whole world, declaring the Gospel to all persons, and teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you; he that shall believe, and shall be baptized, shall be saved: he that shall not believe, shall be condemned.* In which words is implied, that unless a man shall understand and believe all these things, he shall not be saved; so Paul, when to the Jaylor asking what he should do, he bad him believe in the Lord Jesus, and so he should be saved, and his family; is afterward said to have instructed him in the Doctrine of the Lord: So that the meaning of those words, *believe in the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved*, must be this; embrace the faith and Doctrine of Christ and thou shalt be saved. And that this is so, seems especially proved, by what the same Apostle elsewhere writes: *If any one shall teach you otherwise then we have taught, let him be accursed.* For he teacheth otherwise, who mis-interprets any part of that Doctrine. On the contrary, even as Paul, to prove that righteousness was not by the Law, among others, uses this Argument: *If so be the inheritance belonged to them that kept the Law: since no man could keep the same, no body could be saved: Wherefore since the promise must not be void, there must needs be another righteousness then that by the Law.* In the very self same manner we may reason in this place: that, so far as much as no man can rightly understand all that the Lord hath commanded; and it is necessary to salvation, that a man understand all things rightly, and err in nothing, therefore no man shall be saved: But certain it is, a very great and innumerable company shall be saved; it must needs therefore follow, that men may be saved, though they do not rightly understand some part of that which the Lord hath delivered, and be possessed with some Error. And thus witnesseth

John 17.

Rev. 7.

that

that in this life we know things, but in part, and not fully, and we prophecy but in part. But what could we desire more plain then this? Our Lord before his death testified, that his Disciples had embraced all those things, which, he having received of his Father, had declared unto them, and praye for them: howbeit they did not as yet understand, that Christs Kingdom was spiritual, not worldly: neither did they know, that the benefits purchased by Christ, did belong unto the other nations of the world as well as to the Jews. Which things notwithstanding, he had taught them, and they were matters of very great concernment. It is manifest therefore, that when our Lord said, his Disciples had received such things as he had taught them: his meaning was, such of them as were of necessity to salvation; not that they had wholly attained to the knowledg of all that he had taught them. Hence it must be concluded, that all things which Christ taught, were not so necessary to salvation, as that, if a man were ignorant of some part of them, he could not be saved. And it is very wel worth our observation, that, when as the Disciples did not as yet understand that Christs Kingdom was spiritual, and that the Gentiles were in a special manner to be sharers in the salvation purchased by him, he did notwithstanding distribute unto them the representative figures of his body and blood.

Inasmuch therefore, as it is out of all question, that every Truth of God is not of like condition and rank, but that some must of necessity be known and perfectly understood, some may be without inevitable damnation unknown; doubtless it is necessary, either that we should have some mark of difference whereby to distinguish the one from the other, or we must take it for granted, that those points of Christian doctrine are only necessary to be known, concerning which there are special and particular testimonies of Scripture signifying the necessity of their knowledg. As for any general note or difference, though I have diligently enquired into the matter, yet have I not been able to find one. For, if any man shall say that all the principal heads of doctrine are to be reckoned among the necessary points, his saying will be very true, yet not as yet satisfactory. For I shall presently demand, which are those principal points? And if any doctrine be called into question, I shall desire to know whether it be one of those principal ones, that

ask him by what note or mark I may know whether it be to be reckoned among the principal or not: So that we are stil as far to seek as ever. For it is all one to be in doubt which are those points of doctrine that ought of necessity to be known, and to doubt which are the chief heads of Religion, both are alike obscure, so that the one cannot receive light from the other. We must therefore make diligent enquiry, what things they are by name which must be of necessity known and beleaved.

John 17:
Joel 2.

Our Lord says: *Herein consists life eternal, if they shall know thee the only true God, and him whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ.* And the Prophet says, *Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.* And the Apostle: *This is that doctrine of Faith which we publish abroad, that if thou shalt both confess with thy mouth, that Jesus is the Lord, and shalt beleave with thy heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* But that place of John is very remarkable: and many other miracles did Jesus in the presence of his Disciples, which are not contained in this Book: But these are written, that ye might beleave that Jesus is the Messiah the Son of God, and that beleaving ye might obtain life by his name. In which place we may observe First, That whatsoever things are written of Jesus, are written to this end, that men might beleave that Jesus is the Messiah the Son of God: Secondly, That if any man shall beleave, that through him he shall obtain salvation, that man shall not be frustrated of his hope: So that, when Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God, he was pronounced Blessed, forasmuch as that knowledge of him was not from Man, but from God. So Martha, after that our Lord had told her, that he was the Resurrection and the Life, and that if any man beleaved in him, though he were dead, yet he should live; and all that should live, and beleave in him should never dye. She made answer, *I beleave that thou art the Messiah the Son of God, who wast to come into the world.* And to the Thief, who begged of Lord, that he would remember him when he came into his Kingdom, he gave this answer: *This I promise thee, that thou shalt be with me in Paradise.* And the Eunuch after he had confessed, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, he was baptised: Likewise, when some men carrying the palsied man, and endeavoring to bring him to be

Luke 23.

Acts 8.

cured

carad, were not able to come near for the press; but let him climb in his bed through the roof into the midst before Jesus: Jesus knowing their so great faith, said unto the man: Son, thy sins are forgiven thee. By which place we may conjecture what was the faith of that palled person. For he beleaved (in all probability) that that same man, whose name was Jesus, came from God and was in favor with God; and therefore he hoped that by his means he might recover his health. But that he knew all those things which the Church hath for a long time accounted as articles of Faith necessary to be beleaved to Salvation, how likely a matter it is, I leave it to every man to judge. There are likewise many other texts to the very same purpose. For to that same unclean woman, that washed our Lords feet with her tears, it was said: *Thy Faith hath saved thee.* The same was spoken to that other woman having the flux of blood, who hoped, *If she might touch the hem of his garment, she should be healed.* The same was done to that one of the ten cleansed lepers, who returned thanks to God. And John says, *Hereby ye shall know the Spirit of God; whatever spirit shall confess that Jesus Christ is come, and that he is made man, that Spirit is of God; and again; Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God.* Also Paul denies, *That any can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the holy Spirit.* And forasmuch as Abraham is called the Father of Believers, and we are taught chiefly by his example, that Righteousness consists in Faith: Truly it will be labor well bestowed to consider, what that was, which when he beleaved, it was counted unto him for righteousness. He was promised that he should be the Father of many Nations; he was promised that happiness should betide to all the Nations of the world by his seed: Finally, he had the Land of Canaan promised to him, and very great prosperity: But of those points of Religion, which it is judged every body is bound to know upon pain of damnation, we read not a word. Yea, and the mystery of Salvation is self by his seed is very closely and obscurely promised. And, truly these are the only points which I find in the Scriptures, recorded as necessary to be beleaved for the attainment of Salvation. Let us now consider who they be, unto whom in Scripture Salvation is denied in respect of unbelief.

Unto the Apostles it was said in general terms; *Go ye through the*

- the whole earth, publishing the Gospel to all persons; he that shall believe and be baptized, shall be saved; but he that shall not believe, shall be condemned. Which words, as is manifest by what we formerly said, are not for to be understood, as if he had said, he that shall not rightly understand whatever you shall teach, but shall in one point misinterpret your words, shall be condemned; but by the word [Gospel] we must understand, that same blessed message of redemption by the name of Christ. He that shall believe, that by the name of Christ he shall be saved, he shall be saved; he that shall not so believe shall be condemned: In the same manner are those words of Paul to be expounded, If any shall teach you different from what you have learned, let him be accursed; as if he should have said: If any shall teach you, that you must obtain salvation by any other way, then by faith in the name of Christ, let him be accursed. Howbeit, whosoever shall teach any thing other wise then the Apostles taught, although it be none of the principal heads of Religion, yet is he so far forth to be accursed, in as much as all false doctrine comes from none but the Devil, the father of lyes. But it is not presently to be concluded that such a person is quite out of the way of Salvation; for our Lord rebuking Peter himself because he dehorted him from suffering death, calls him Satan. More particularly, our Lord says, Unless you shall both eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye shall not obtain life. Which imports as much as if he had said, Unless ye shall believe that I am the Son of God, and that I am sent from God my Father, and that you shall obtain Salvation by my Name, you shall not obtain life. And again, Unless ye shall believe that I am he, ye shall dye in your sins. And John says, Who is a liar, but he that denies Jesus to be the Son. And hereby shall you know the Spirit of God; whatever spirit confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. But whatever spirit shall deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, the same is not of God. Paul adds; If you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. And a little after, Ye have no part in Christ, who have your right consciences in the Law; ye are fallen from Grace. And Peter there is no other name among men under heaven, by which we can be saved. By which testimonies of Scripture we are taught, that such places as witness that he which beleeves that Jesus Christ is the Son of God shall be saved,
- are

are not so to be understood, as that if a man shal so beleve that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; as he beleeves that *Julius Caesar* was the first who brought the *Roman Commonwealth* into bondage, and made himself *Emperor of Rome*, or any other matter wherein himself is not concerned, that he shal be saved; but that he truly beleeves that Jesus is the Son of God, who beleeves it as a thing that concerns himself; that is to say, who beleeves that he, whom we call Jesus, is the Son of God, his Jesus and his Christ, that is, his Savior and his King, in whom alone he places all the hope of his Salvation. Unless we shal admit of this interpretation, neither *Pauls* nor *Peters* words wil hang together.

These very few points are all that we can find expressed in Scripture, as being necessary for every man to believe; to the end he may be saved: *viz.* That he acknowledge the one only true God, and him whom he hath sent, Jesus Christ his Son; being made man, and that he believe that God hath raised him from the dead, and that by his name he shal obtain salvation, and that he place not his righteousness in the works of the Law: But that he be verily perswaded, that there is no other name under heaven, whereby we can be saved. Now let us make enquiry, what other thing there is, that being inferred from these, may be in like manner necessary to be known. And forasmuch as the Scriptures teach, that every man is liable to the severe judgment of God, as being, by reason of the fall of *Adam*, born in sin, and of such a natural constitution, that he continually offends God, and consequently guilty of eternal punishment; and since they further teach, that this world at length coming to an end, all persons shal be raised at the last day: the just unto eternal happiness, the unjust and wicked unto eternal torments: No man can understand what it is to be saved, neither consequently what it is he should believe, unless he have some tollerable knowledg, both of his own condition, of the Law of God, and of Gods purpose to judg the quick and the dead. For the Apostle declares, that from the Law springs the knowledge of Sin, and he should not have known Sin but by the Law. *Bodie* follows not, from what we have laid down, that such a degree of knowledg, either of the Law of God, or of mans natural condition, is necessary: as that, if any man shal err in the interpretation of some Commandment of God, or in judging of the nature of

man, and the abilities thereof, he cannot be saved. This much *saith* follows, that a man ought to believe, that he is liable to eternal condemnation, and to trust he is freed therefrom, by Christ, and by his benefits, ordained unto eternal blessedness. Again, *saith Paul*, that they have no title to Christ, who place their righteousness in the Law, in the Law, *Play of God*; What shall we say of them who place their righteousness in the Laws, mandates and inventions of men? They may doubtless much rather be said to have fallen from the righteousness and benefits of Christ. Semblably, since the Scriptures teach, that by the name of Christ alone, we must hope for salvation: it follows, that he that shall hope for salvation by the name of the blessed *Virgin*, or *Peter*, or *Paul*, or any Saint whatsoever, hath no share in Christ. Likewise, it being a thing necessarily to be believed to salvation, that Christ was raised from the dead: and it cannot be understood, that any is raised to life that was not first dead; it follows, that it ought of necessity to be believed that he dyed. In a word, forasmuch as our Lord hath commanded, that all be taught the Gospel and baptized in the name of the Father, Son and holy Spirit, whose work this Faith is; inasmuch as he opens our hearts, and reveals unto us this goodness of God towards us; both this command ought to be known, and that it is the holy Spirit by whom we believe, and by whom God dwells in us: and whom, we ought by incessant prayers to begg of God, that he would bestow him upon us. I confess ingeniously, I cannot find any other points, that I can from Scripture demonstrate, and prove to be of necessary knowledge to the attainment of salvation. If any man can shew any more, there is nothing that I would sooner wish, than to understand what ever other points there are, over and above what we have laid down; and to hear those Texts by whose authority we are obliged to acknowledge them for matters that ought of necessity to be known. Now for us to reckon up particularly all such points as we judge not necessary to be known, to the end a man may be saved: there is no necessity, neither were it convenient, and it would be an endless work. A right line is the measure both of right and crooked. Only to the end, that it may be the better understood, when any points comes into question, how it may be manifest, to be either of necessity to be known, or not of necessity, we will examine and couple

couple of Doctrines, to the end, that as we shal try these, all other may be tryed. *Sabellius* (as *Vigilius* Martyr Bishop of *Trent* relates) did so acknowledge the Father, Son, and holy Spirit, as that he would not have it to be understood, that the Father was one person, the Son another. But he said, that he who was the Father filled the womb of the Virgin, and in that man whom he assumed, is termed the Son: when as not two persons, but one Father is understood by both termes. And he that thus understands the matter worships but one God. Some man may therefore enquire, whether or no this point be of such concernment, as that it is necessary for him that would be saved, not to err therein: that is to say, whether *Sabellius*, holding such an Error could be saved: or whether he ought absolutely to be reckoned for an *Heathen*, as hitherto he hath bin ever accounted. We have already proved, that it is necessary, that men should believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. But to believe, that he is the Son of God, is no to pronounce these words, nor yet in thoughts to give unto Christ the title of Son of God: but rather by a sincere faith, to attribute unto him that which these words signifie. Now the word *Son*, signifies not any thing: I say, the notion of that word is not such, as that any person may be understood to be his own Son; neither can the term [Father] be so understood, as that any one should be his own Father. But he is called a Son, who hath for Father, not himself, but some other person; and he a Father who hath for Son, not himself but some other. Forasmuch then as *Sabellius* did confound the Father and the Son, and denied that they were two distinct persons; it is very plain, that he did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, which it was altogether necessary for him to believe. By which example we are taught, that concerning such points as are propounded unto us by God, as necessary to be believed; we ought diligently to examine what the words signifie, least retaining only a certain vain shadow of words, we come to deny the things themselves by those words intimated; let us labour to understand the words, that we may sincerely embrace the things themselves. Having examined this Tene, let us consider another point, which as these times go, is perhaps, no less worthy of our knowledge.

There hath been a long and very Tragical controversie about the

interpretation of those words, *Take, this is my Body*. Let us consider therefore whether this be a matter of such consequence, that therefore men should rend themselves one from another, vex, disgrace and account one another as enemies. Howbeit, it is not necessary that I should in this place discover my self of what side I am: only I shal so far profess my self to be of both parts, inasmuch as I make no question, but that both belong to the true Church of God. Now I shal deal with each side by it self apart, and though I may grant that both parties do otherwise say right, and truly interpret the words of Christ, yet I shal shew, that neither party ought to condemn the other, on account in guilty of an Heresie. Come on then, to begin with you, who admit of no *Trope* in our Lords words, but judge, they ought to be understood according to their plain natural meaning: you do not only say, that such as account our Lords words tropicall, do thus interpret the same: but you seem to judge of them, as of persons, the most erroneous in point of Religion that can be: you think you cannot find words bad enough, to express your hatred, against them according to their deserts. Put the case, that with this their so great Error, they may notwithstanding obtain Salvation, and belong to the Church of God? How can they (will you say) who account the Son of God himself either to be a liar, or a vain speaker, foolishly uttering contradictions, and such things as are quite contrary to all sense and reason? Alas, miserable men that we are, how far doth hatred, springing from our differences, transport us? If men question the interpretation of some words, must they needs make Christ a liar? Which of those men, whom you account Adversaries in this point, did ever deny, that either in these or any other words Christ should be believed? Did such a conceit ever enter into any of their minds, as once to suspect such a thing? Could they fear that he should be a liar, for whose name they would suffer the most greivous torments which Tyrants could inflict? Away with such a peevishe and altogether unjust interpretation: the Controversie is concerning the meaning not the truth of the words, then which they willingly confess nothing is more true. But (you will say) the words are so clear, so plain and manifest, that it is impossible for a man not to understand their meaning. To you that understand them they are plain and clear, to him that otherwise understands them, they

are

are not so clear, or if they be, it is in that sense in which he takes them. Wherefore of necessity thus much must be granted, that the difference is only about the meaning, and not about the Truth of the words. Thou therefore that sayest, that such as deny the corporal presence of Christ in the Lords Supper, are Hereticks, and cannot be saved: by what Testimonies of Scripture canst thou prove what thou sayest? Our Lord himself promises eternal life to all that call upon his name, who believe that he is the Sonne of God, who place the hope of their salvation in him alone, not in the works of the Law or any other thing. This faith, this hope, those constantly profess whom thou callest Hereticks: by what Testimonies of Gods Word art thou induced by thy judgment to deny them salvation? Produce one word out of the holy Scriptures, which says, that such persons shal not enjoy eternal life; Thou mayst not pronounce so from thine own head: dost thou think; haply, that it is impossible for that man to call upon the name of the Lord, and to put all his confidence in him, who cannot understand, nor consequently believe, that his body really present, is distributed in the Sacrament? What should hinder him? But if thou wilt contend, that he that believes not the latter, cannot believe the former: I would very fain hear, how thou canst prove what thou sayest. But in case, that faith unto which our Lord doth promise salvation, may stand without the confession of his bodys presence in the Sacrament; and yet thou cease not to account persons so believing, to be no members of the true Church of God: consider with thy self again and again, if thou dost not really pollute thy self with that same crime of making Christ a lyar, which thou art accustomed falsely to charge upon others.

I come now to those who say the words are tropical, who because it is affirmed that the body of Christ is present in the bread, at the same time in very many places, do gather many very great absurdities; but especially this, That such a position denies the humanity of Christ. Wherefore, inasmuch as this point concerning the Son of God, his being made man, and raised from the dead, is necessarily to be known and believed: they deny that such as affirm such a presence of Christs body can be saved, unless they shal repent. Such absurdities as they gather from the affirmation of Christs body (whether they err or not in so doing) experience doth

manifest, that they can by no means be induced, but to think, that they really follow from the said position. Let us grant therefore, that such absurdities do all of them undoubtedly follow the foresaid presence. But supposing all this, must they therefore that hold the real presence needs be *Aliens* from Christ? They must needs, (sayst thou) for that condition which they attribute to the body of Christ, that it can be in many places at one and the same time, overthrowes the humanity of Christ: so that he which says, Christs body may be in divers places at the same time, doth as good as say, that Christs body is no body: and if Christ hath not a true body, he is not true man, and if he be not now true man, either he was never made man, or if he were, he arose not from the dead: both which Doctrines, we before shewed are necessarily to be believed. Wherefore, since no man can believe contradictories, they not believing the Humanity and Resurrection, being necessary points, cannot be saved. Those men truly, press the matter vehemently; howbeit, let us make tryal, if we cannot make it appear, that hope of Salvation may stand with such gross *Errors*. Whereas therefore they say, that it is impossible for men to believe things that contradict one the other, that is then true (as we shewed before) when they see the contradiction between them. For I confesse, that a man cannot believe, both that Christ hath a true humane body, and that he hath not. Howbeit, such things as are truly opposite one to the other, may notwithstanding seem unto many men, void of any such opposition. And in case they are not discerned to be contradictory, the one to the other, nothing lets, but that men may believe them to be both true; so that though it be granted, that these Tenets oppose one the other, and cannot stand together, that there should be a true body, which notwithstanding may be in divers places, at one and the same instant, yet may they seem not to be opposite, so that men may believe, that our Lord hath a true humane body, and yet that the same body may be in divers places at one & the same time. Forasmuch therefore as they believe, and that most strongly, that Christ is true man, the Son of God, and raised from the dead, and all other things which the Scripture holds forth as necessary to be believed; what reason hast thou to deny that they may be saved, even in this their *Error*? It is clear therefore, that as wel those which hold Christs body to be

be in the Sacramental bread, as those which deny the same, although it must needs be, that one side err, yet are they both (if on the otherwise conscientious observers of our Lords commands) in the way of Salvation. In which regard, they are bound to love and reverence one another, as brethren, the servants of God, and members of Christ. If they shall mutually vex one another with revilings, reproaches & cursings; if they shall go on to exercise enmity one against another, they shall not escape the just judgment of God. Wherefore, I pray and beseech both parties by Christ Jesus: that laying aside all hatred and rash judgments, they would strive to go beyond one another in offices of Love. Let us abandon bad language, scoffs, contempt; so wil it certainly fall out, that such as err, shall at the length be brought to acknowledge the Truth: If we shall but once be united in heart and affection, the Lord will not deny us any favour or success; neither wil he ever suffer, that such as out of true love endeavour to draw their brethren out of *Error*, shall reap no fruit of their labour.

Now look how we have discussed these two points, *viz.* the *Error of Sabellius*, and the Controversie about the corporal presence in the Sacramental bread; it wil be easie for any man in like manner, to judge of what ever other points shall come into Controversie. For concerning what ever *Error* shall be questioned, we must enquire, whether or no, the person so erring may not believe all such things, as to the belief whereof Salvation is promised; that in case he may, we may persuade our selves, that he errs not in a point necessary to be known unto salvation: but if not, that he errs in a necessary Doctrine. Howbeit, whosoever would condemn any man for any *Error*, ought to consider again and again, what assurance he hath, that such an *Error* cannot stand with salvation. Do but consider, when as our Lord says, *come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I wil give you ease*: Shall any man be so fool-hardy, as to dare to pul back him that is coming, and of his own head to say to him: Oh! do you hear, it wil be in vain for you to go unto Christ, who do not believe this or that point? Who art thou that wilt hinder another mans servant from coming at his Masters call? With what confidence takest thou upon thee, to divine at the wil of God, not being very clearly manifested unto thee? Must you, according to your fan-

cy,

ey, set bounds to the goodness, mercy, and kindness of God? Hel
unto whom it belongs to give life, calls all unto him; and wilt
thou, by I know not what exceptions of thine own devising, limit
those graces, which he promiseth, but limits not? What dost thou,
in so doing? Doubtless, as much as in thee lies; thou robbest a
man of his life, not of this life which is rather a death then life, but
of eternal life; and the Kingdom of Heaven, adjudging him to eter-
nal torments; neither is it to one alone; thou art so injurious, but
to thousands haply. Thou maimest Christ in so many members,
thou rendest the Church into Sects; and paveest a way to infinite
mischiefs. And if our Lord so severely menace such as offend the
least; what thinkest thou shal become of them; who by their rash
judging have drove men to make Sects, without any necessary
cause so requiring? Wo unto them: And if so be the way which
we have set down, to distinguish between points necessary to be
believed and not necessary, seem not to be sufficient; do thou, if
thou canst, produce a better, one more sure, firm and constant. If
thou wonderest, that among such points, which we have reckoned
up as necessary to be known, thou dost not find certain other
points of Religion, very highly accounted of; Read over diligently
the whole Old and New Testament, and search thoroughly by what
Texts thou canst prove, that those points are so necessary to be
known: that he that understands them not, cannot be saved.
Consider what knowledg the People of *Israel* could have of them
from the Old Testament, who were notwithstanding to be saved,
by the same faith that we are. Consider again, what the thief
could know, when it was said to him, *this day shalt thou be with
me in Paradise*: Or the *Eunuch* when *Philip* baptized him: Or
that woman to whom, when she had washed our Lords feet, it was
said, *thy faith hath saved thee*: Or she that was wasted away
by the bloody issue: or the Palsied man, with many others, whose
sins were forgiven them meerly upon their confessing the name of
the Lord. It is also observable, what the reason should be, that
whereas these points which we have set down as necessary, are so
frequently repeated in Scripture, and required of necessity to be
known, those points which some men so highly account of, are
not in like manner required. If those books had bin written by
the wit of man, which we account (as indeed they are) sacred,

we should say that honest *Homer* had took a nap and forgot himself: But they are indicted by the Holy Spirit. This therefore is not come to passe by chance, but by the sure counsell of God: who, had he intended that those points should have been of like estimation, he would at least in some one place, plainly have signified his mind. Which since he hath not done, what is man that he should be able to conjecture Gods mind? These things ought not to be measured by our wit or judgment, but by the wisdom of God revealed unto us from heaven: it alone must be regarded, what ever reason may dictate.

But if so be any one shall erre in a point that ought necessarily to be known, and cannot be reduced to a right judgment, no man ought to question but that such a person may be justly condemned and cast out of the society of the godly. And that not only, if being admonished, he shall go on to seduce others, but also though he will be silent: for what participation can the Church of God have with him unto whom eternal life is not promised? But if the point, about which some man erres, be not in the number of those that must needs be known; in this case, I conceive we must use a distinction. For if he that thinks amisse, and cannot be reduced, shall likewise endeavour to seduce others, having been often admonished to desist; I see no reason but that he may and ought to be cast out of the Congregation: For such an one exceedingly offends the brethren: and though the matter be not of the greatest weight, it followes not, that the error is not pernicious; for look how one point of knowledge springs from another, even so do errors arise of errors; and what is there, wherein the glory of God is concerned, that ought not to be of great moment? But if so be he seduce not others, so long as he holds those points that are necessary to salvation, he may be yet in the number of brethren: What if they shal cut him off? They shall (as much as in them lyes) cut a living member from the body of Christ, which were very unjust, neither is there any precept of God commanding such a thing. And so much of a just and unjust judgment: Now let us consider, for our orderly and just proceeding thereto, what we ought to do, and what to avoid.

For the matter of tenets: if some very pernicious errors arise, there is nothing hinders, but that we may forthwith make head
N
against

against it, and teach the people what a doctrine it is, that they may take heed of it. But the man is not to be cast out, untill such time as, according to the rule of the Gospell, all courses have been tried to reclaime him; and if we are forced to proceed to an ejection, we must be carefull that nothing be done, whereby any hinderance may arise to the Church. Now it is very clear, that by how much the greater ill-will any man shall bear towards the Church, by so much the more may the Church look to be molested by him, that he will more desperately and eagerly plot against her, privily seducing al he can, and by calumnies endeavouring to render the Church hatefull, and the like. Now by how much the more sharply any man is dealt with, by so much the more will he be moved against the Church. In consideration whereof, my judgment is, that the Heretique shall in such sort be condemned, as that the cause of his condemnation being simply signified, no kind of reproach be used, and that this be done with intimation rather of grief, then of any anger or hatred: in such manner as the judgment may be full of gravity, but void of all passion and sharpnesse. But we have before spoken, when we handled the duty of a private man, that which is futable to the present occasion, & have shewed how alwayes more hurt then good comes by sharp language. In a word, we must take heed lest those men arrogate unto themselves to judge either of the doctrine, or of the man, unto whom it does not appertain. For, doubtlesse it belongs not to any private person, nor yet to two or three, but to the whole Church. Let two or three Prophets speak (sayes the Apostle) *and let the rest judge.*

And this is the course the Church ought to take for the resisting the growth of errors: We are now to speak of the Magistrates duty. An argument (if there be any) full of controversie, intricate and of very great concernment. Such as cannot away with the doctrine received, be their judgment better, or be it worse, find themselves exceedingly grieved that they may not be suffered for to speak their minds. On the other side, those whose doctrine both the Magistrates and people approve, and also esteem of their authority; since they cannot without great grief, nor many times without some diminishment of their reputation, heare controversies daily raised; unto such the use of the sword cannot but seem very necessary to repress such as will not rest content with the doctrine generally

Generally received; and it is commonly seen that as any thing is subservient unto the interest of any persons, such persons are soon perswaded, that that thing is justly put in practise. Wherefore, since that a mans own commodity coming into consideration, permits him not to judge so iustly as is fit, our thoughts must by all means possible be withdrawn from such considerations; and if this be hard to be done, the next hereunto is, that in thought at least every one change his own condition, and make himself of the other part, and so set himself to consider both what may be most convenient to be done, and what is most agreeable to the Law of God. If therefore liberty or tolleration seem like to be convenient for thee: imagine thy self to be in his condition who allowes of the doctrine received, and would have it preserved, and that there are certain men who daily vex thee, men of no judgment, of no spirit, void of shame, making a perpetual noise, and excessively troublesome; Taylors, Fisher-men, Butchers, Cookes, silly women, confidently argue about the chief heads of Religion, meddle with every thing, call all into question, deceive the simple, breed innumerable scandals. Doubtlesse if thou shalt (as we have said) imagine thy self to be in such a condition; a thousand to one, but thou wilt conceive that it is absolutely necessary to bridle so great licentiousnesse. But if thou shalt afterwards cast thine eye upon such places of Scripture as are commonly believed to arme the Magistrate against corrupters of religion, haply thou wilt much more be enclined so to think & to judge that such a course will be very profitable. He which conceives the doctrine commonly received to be true and sincere, and judges that it were wisely done for the preservation thereof, to put hereticks to death: let him think with himself, that it may notwithstanding come to passe, that by little and little, while the pastours slumber, the doctrine may be corrupted, and the Church degenerate from her ancient piety. For as soon as the Church obtains some short peace and tranquillity, discipline is slackened by little and little, piety growes cold, and a wonderfull forgetfulness of God and his Law creeps into the minds of men: which ingratitude since God cannot let go unpunished, he withdrawes his Spirit, and gives freer scope unto seducers, by whose craft and subtilty it comes to passe, that, though the same doctrine seem to remain, yet it is by degrees changed and

corrupted; now, where it is grown into an use to decide controversies in Religion by the sword, whatsoever doctrine in time to come shall be commonly received, whosoever shall oppose that doctrine, be it right or wrong, he shall be accounted an heretick; and what ever texts of Scripture or arguments he shall alleage for himself, the hangman must be the only man that shall answer all. And so it will come to passe, that look what formerly was a just severity, will be turned into a monstrous and horrible cruelty. Imagine thy self therefore to have fallen into those times, wherein it is unlawful, for such as think aright, to oppose such errors as are commonly received: and if they shall dare so much as to mutter in the least degree, the sword, the gallows, the faggot shall be at their heels: No place is allowed to plead their cause; and it shall come into thy mind, that such great tyranny had its originall from the punishing of such as were hereticks indeed; verily thou wouldst rather wish that no heretick had ever been punished, then that such tyranny should come into use. It is likewise to be considered, how little oft-times the successe of putting hereticks to death, answers the expectation of such as practise it. For when a man understands that he cannot safely publish his opinion, he will not discover the same at all times, in all places, or to every one he meets with: but he will first try how they are affected, he will by little and little insinuate himself, and if he find himself mistaken in the party, he will make triall else-where. But if he sees, that eare is given to what he sayes, he will make his progresse by degrees, until he be wholly possessed of the parties mind; and thus will he practise with a second, and a third; and such as shall he make companions of his error, those commonly he will make his partners in spreading the same abroad, corrupting others, and propagating the sect; so that before the Magistrate shall come to hear that one is seduced, sometimes a great part of the people is misled, and the wound become almost incurable. And since these things are done privately, not so much as those that are over the Church can use the remedies proper to them, *viz.* the power of the Word: for though they hear some rumours, yet can they not distinctly understand what is done; what Arts the seducers use, with what arguments they presse their tenets, no man can relate. For, such as can, neither will nor dare; they that would, know them not, and for the most part relate only their

their own suspicions or fictions : and suppose the Pastors have some grounds to proceed upon ; forasmuch as they are exceedingly hated by those whom they should heal, and lookt upon as tyrants, all their labour is lost, especially if (as is commonly seen) sharp language and reproaches shall be added. Moreover, when Pastors shall place their hope of preserving their doctrine, and resisting heretiques by the sword, and shall not see any great need of learning to that intent, they addict themselves to idleness, and so by degrees a generall ignorance followeth: so that Satan may afterwards easily obtrude any superstitions and errors. Neither is it lightly to be passed over, that forasmuch as it is commonly the lot of godly persons to suffer persecutions, reproaches and afflictions for religions sake, hereby, as by a most manifest token, especially if with a couragious and cheerfull mind they undergo them, and their conversation be unblameable, they do exceedingly justify their cause with simple people ; whiles on the contrary part, those from whom they suffer such things, can hardly avoid the imputation of great injustice and tyrannicall cruelty. By which means it comes to passe, that many are daily exasperated, confirmed in error, and rendred wholly incurable. For we have too many examples before our eyes, which if any man shall diligently weigh, verily he will find small cause much to desire the use of the sword, for the extirpation of heresies. In a word, that thy judgment may be pure and sincere, thou must bring thy self to such a passe, as not to desire it may be so, rather then so: but this alone, which way soever the matter fall, which side soever prevaile, that such tenets may be established, as are agreeable with Gods Word, and make for his glory.

Certain it is, that seducers were by the old Law punished with death, and in case any City should be drawn from the right worship of God to worship idols, the Law commanded that that City should be destroyed and burnt up, never to be built again. But some suppose that Law was of force only untill Christ, and that it ought not to take place under the New Testament : the ground of their conjecture being this, that the Israelitish nation was a type of the Christian Church, and that they had promises of earthly sensible things, such as were of use in this life, and that their sacrifices were of the same strain, and in a word, all their services : which

neverthelesse did signifie things invisible appertaining to eternall life. Which being so, they collect, that that corporall punishment was likewise a type of eternall damnation; and that therefore this law, with all others ordained to figure out things to come, had an end at the coming of Christ: Which conjecture seems to me so probable, that I should not tell how to reject it, did not the reason, in the Law set down, oppose the same. For thus it is in the Law: that all Israel hearing, may fear, and do no more so for the future, Which reason, truly, is alwayes of force: so that though the Law it self be expired, yet the Magistrate hath as much authority to make another to the same purpose, as he hath authority to make lawes against murderers, adulterers, and other criminall offenders, Howbeit, the words of our Lord seem to perswade the contrary, where he propounds the parable of the tares. For to the servants demanding whether they should go and pluck up the tares, the housholder is said to have answered, *that they should not go, lest gathering the tares, they should pluck up the Wheat.* Which place while some interpret one way, and some another, we may perceive how great a difference there is between gathering of testimonies of Scripture to establish an opinion which a man hath already fixed in his mind, and to make use of them meely for the clearing of the truth. Now, the way to find out the truth, were, if when thou hast found an exposition which seems to make for thy opinion, thou shouldest assume the person of the party dissenting, and diligently consider what might be said against it, and not presently applaud thy self in thine own exposition. Hence it would come to passe, that those which dissent should not alwayes dissent, but such as erre would at last give way to them that judge aright. But for the most part, we care more for Victory then Truth. And forasmuch as the solution of the question in hand seems wholly to consist in the exposition of this text; we must beware again and again lest interest blind our eyes, and that we bestow not lesse time and study in the examination thereof, then the cause requires. That exposition truly which those give, which say, that Christ doth not here exclude all rigour, but that he shews, such evils are to be suffered, which cannot without some great mischief be corrected; seems not futable to the words of the Housholder: for he doth not say, Come on, go your wayes and do it, but take heed lest *with the tares*

tares you pluck up the Wheat ; but he absolutely forbids them to meddle in the businesse : and wills that both the tares and the wheat should grow untill the harvest. Whence it appears that great violence is offered to the words by such an exposition. Neither do they seem to expound those words more fitly, who affirme that they are to be understood of the universall purging of the Church, which our Lord would have deferred till the day of Judgment; not forbidding, in the mean time, the purging of particular Churches. Neither do I think it requisite, we make any long enquiry, how truly the servants of the Householder are said to mean the Angels ; let us rather with attentive minds consider what it is which is forbidden : Hence we shall soon see who they are that are forbidden. Clear it is, that the Wheat is the godly, the tares the ungodly ; but whether all kind of ungodly persons, or some one sort of them, we shall see hereafter. And the field is the world : To take therefore the tares out of the field, is to kill the ungodly, to put them out of the number of those that live in this world. But our Lord forbids that, and would have them grow with the Wheat untill the time of harvest, and not separated till then. But (thou wilt say) he forbids the purging and cleansing of the whole field, but not of particular Churches. Suppose then that men shall be so diligent in cleansing particular Churches, that none shall remain uncleansed, will not the whole become by that course cleansed ? But thou deniest that that can be done : yet suppose it may ; thou must of necessity grant, that when every particular Church shall be cleansed, the whole Church will be likewise pure, which being done before Harvest time, would crosse the will of the Lord ; forasmuch as, look what he would not have done before Harvest, he wills as little that it should be done by men, as by Angels. Now if so be any Magistrate shall go about to cleanse, not the whole Church which is not in his power, but that which he can, what other thing shall he do, but, as much as in him lyes, resist the will of the Lord ? And truly how small soever the part cleansed shall be, it will be a part of the whole ; so that he that shall do herein what he shall be able, it may well be said, that if he might have had his will, the whole should have been purged. By all which it appears, that this exposition cannot be allowed. Others would have it, that it is only forbidden to pluck up the tares by war. But forasmuch as the words

words do as well expresse that way of plucking up the tares, when a particular person is censured and put to death, as that of plucking them up by war; he that would have the words of the Householder to be understood only of the former, bringing no sure reason why he so interprets, ought to be accounted a guesser rather than an expounder. For the words are to be taken according to their evident sense, unlesse some sufficient reason do dissuade: so as if they be generall, we must understand the speech to be generall: if the Law distinguish not, we ought not to distinguish. How then shall we expound this Parable? Those words (saith thou) *Let both grow untill the Harvest*, cannot be understood according to the letter, that the wicked should be suffered to grow as much as the godly: So far you and I are agreed. For I see what absurdities would follow, if all the Magistrates authority, and all discipline were removed. Howbeit, plain it is, that a certain kind of ungodly persons are here intended, who though they may seeme such as ought to be cut off, yet it is forbidden them to whom that work should belong, to cut them off. Now this cannot be understood of adulterers, theeves, and other flagitious persons, since its manifest that Magistrates are ordained by God, and are his Ministers for the punishment of evill doers, neither do they bear the sword in vain: yea, though it should appear that he which hath committed adultery, murder, or other crime, were of the Wheat, by his notable repentance, the Magistrate is not therefore bound to spare him; neither truly will any man in his wits deny, but that monstrous wickednesses ought to be restrained by the avengement of the sword. And if so be the Parable cannot be meant of all ungodly persons, it is necessary that those whom it intend, should be by some note of difference distinguished from all other. Now from whence may this difference be rather taken, then from that thing wherein godly and ungodly persons do most differ one from another? But, what is that? Is it not in the doctrine of Religion? with respect whereunto the one sort is called pious, the other impious. But there are two kinds of impious persons, for some are estranged from the true religion, both in name and in truth, as the worshippers of Idols, and the *Turks*, but especially Atheists: others, are in name and profession Christians, but in deed and in truth they are nothing so, their doctrine being corrupted with great and foule errors, which

which kind of persons we call Heretiques. The former sort may again be divided into two parts. For some of them have never professed the Christian Religion, others have Apostatized there-from. Since therefore we are to distinguish men according to their religion, either we must hold that both these kind of ungodly persons are meant in the Parable, or that one is understood: that we should say both are understood, the words of the Parable give us little encouragement: for they speak of such seed as the enemy had sown among the Wheat: so that it is manifest they mean such kind of impious persons as converse among the godly, that is, the true Christians, and adorn themselves with the name of Christians, of which kind are Heretiques. And this truly is very sutable to the nature of tares: for they say that these tares are nothing but Wheat or Barly corrupted by the over-moisture of the soile, and soaked with frequent rains; so that heresie could not have been set forth by a more fit comparison: so that this speech is all one, as if the servants should have asked their Lord, whether or no they should kill Heretiques, and take them out of the way. That this exposition is neither absurd, nor unsutable, but rather the necessary interpretation of the place, I conceive every one will perceive, that weighs the words with no other desire but to find out the truth. The Enemy is said to have sown his own seed amongst the good seed: among the seed (I say) which the Lord had sown. Now the word, Seed, is taken sometimes for that out of which any thing grows, (and this its proper acceptation:) sometimes, but improperly, it is taken for that which grows out of the seed. The seed which the Lord sowed, to speak properly, was the Gospel which he preached, as it is taken in the Parable next before: but in a lesse proper expression, the seed are they that believed the Gospel. So the Devils seed, speaking properly, are false doctrines scattered amongst Christians, improperly the Devils seed are they who embrace false doctrines. Now, that the faithfull are called the Lords seed, the ungodly the seed of the Devil, in respect of that seed from which their godlinesse and ungodlinesse springs, is clear, in as much as both the good and bad herbs are said to have grown up after the sowing of seed; and because the servants wondred how the tares or cockle sprang up, since there was none but good seed sown, & bad plants could not grow but from bad seed. So that it is
O manifest

manifest by what hath been said, that by the tares none but Heretiques can be understood. The old Law then (wilt thou say) and its reason is abrogated, by this of our Lord. But what if, notwithstanding all that hath been said, both Laws may be still in force, and the latter derogate nothing from the former? It would (I suppose) seem very strange. But what if it may be so? And what is there that may be alledged why this exposition should not be received as true? Come on then, let us examine whether this Law may stand with that of the Old Testament, though it forbid Heretiques to be killed. Now against whom was the Old Law given? verily against such as either drew away others from the true God to worship Idols, or at least being seduced themselves, had forsaken him. But we do not terme such offenders Heretiques, but Renegadoes & apostates; there is in that law no mention of hetericks. But God (will you say) doth as much abhor that worship, which is not according to his own commandement, as he doth the worshipping of other gods. Very well; suppose it: What will you infer? Doth it thereby appear, that the law which was made against Apostates, must be executed against Heretiques? An Heretique is not comprehended in the name or notion of an Apostate, neither is he mentioned in any other word of the Law. And if so be thou wilt needs draw the law to mean him, that canst thou not do from the proper force of the words: But (as Lawyers speak) by way of extension and large interpretation. But it would first be known, whether every Law will admit of such extensions; and if not every one, which may admit of them, and wherefore or upon what ground; and whether or no in this Law those things are found, in regard of which an extension is to be made. Doubtlesse, if thou shalt accommodate the Law to that which the words do not signify; thou must do it only by a conjecture at the mind of the Law-giver. But, with what Law-giver art thou here to deal? With such an one verily, as at whose mind to guesse is the hardest thing in the world: So that all such conjecturing cannot but be very doubtfull. And besides, since there is extant a generall law, that forbids killing, we should not come to the shedding of blood by the authority and warrant of a doubtful law, but of one very clear and plain. And all this difficulty would remain, though we could perceive no difference between the case of an Apostate, and that of

an Heretique. For we might justly suspect, that, though we could not see it, there might yet be a wide difference. Neither should we run head-long to make an extension of a law to take away a mans life. But what, if there are not wanting large differences by us discernable? For an Apostate, doth not only forsake the true worship of God, but refuses to give any credit to the Word of God: with an Heretique the Authority thereof remaineth firme: so that thou maist find other weapons wherewith to vanquish an Heretique, besides stones and swords; but other weapons wherewith to an Apostate, thou hast none. In which respect peradventure it was, that God would by the most grievous punishment terrifie a man from al thought of forsaking his worship, and denying to give credit to his Word, and would not however that an Heretique should be subject to like penalty. Hereunto may be added, that the Church reaps no benefit by Apostates, but by Heretiques much, especially in this particular, that by means of the godly are provoked more seriously and diligently to search the Scriptures, who would otherwise addict themselves to sloth, and by degrees become ignorant of all religion. But this is of greatest weight, that the Magistrate cannot be so mistaken, as to conceive that a man apostatizeth from the true religion, or sollicites others to apostatize, that doth not so do; whereas he that erres not may easily seem to him to erre, or he that erres but a little, may easily seem to him to erre very grievously, which the many controversies even amongst the most learned, wherewith the Church is evermore exercised, do plainly prove. Now, when I say the Magistrate may erre in such a case, I put no fault in the word of God, as if it were not clear and true, but in the Magistrate himself; in as much as he brings not such instruction, nor such a spirit to the interpretation thereof, as he ought to do. For how few of these men that exercise the office of Magistrates, though they professe the Gospel, do study the Scriptures as they ought to do? How few of them are eminent for piety and prudence? So that from them no other but a rash and unjust judgement, in a matter of this nature, is to be expected? But, you will say, the question is not, whether every Magistrate have authority to proceed against such as he shall account for Heretiques; but the question is of a truly pious and prudent Magistrate, and of such as are Heretiques indeed. I heare what you say:

But who is there bearing the sword, that will not be accounted godly, and that will not account for an Heretique whosoever thwarts him in matters of Religion? So that this will unavoydably follow, that, look what authority you allow a pious Magistrate against true Heretiques, that will every Magistrate usurpe against every one that shal dissent from him, be his judgment what it will be. For as much therefore as we have shewed, that we might not safely make an extension of the Law, though we could observe no difference between an Apostate and an Heretique: What shall be done now we see so much difference? It is clear therefore from the premises, that the old Law remains in force, or that at least the like may be renewed, and yet Heretiques are not to be put to death, forasmuch as the case of an Heretique, and the case of an Apostate are different.

But some may demand, whether or no it may then at least be just to proceed against an Heretique when being commanded to be silent, he shall notwithstanding go on to infect as many with his poison as he can? A question of great concernment, in the solution whereof to erre will be of dangerous consequence, on which side soever the error light. For if it be the will of God that Magistrates should punish Heretiques that seduce; the reason is, because it will make for the good of his Church, and for his own glory; so that if the Magistrate shall therein be negligent, he will be lyable to under-go severe punishment from God: But if it be the will of God, that they should not be punished, doubtlesse he hath weighty reasons why they should not: so that the Magistrate shall not crosse his will without punishment. Wherefore it lies the Magistrate in hand to be very careful, that he go not about to guess at the mind of God by his own wit or judgment, but that he attain to the understanding thereof by a diligent search and discussion of Gods Word. And since it is clear, that by the tares is meant Heretiques, unlesse somewhat else had been added, besides the forbidding to kill Heretiques, the true way of interpretation, accommodated to the ordinary manner of speaking, would manifestly require, that we should understand the Law (for so we would call the Householders forbidding to pluck up the Tares) to forbid the killing of Heretiques as Heretiques, or because they are Heretiques. As, if the Law should forbid to kill a theefe, we would understand, that

that the Law forbids that he should be killed for his theft. But in case any man, besides his being an Heretique, would teach contrary to the Magistrates command, the words of the Law so interpreted, would not seem to save him harmlesse; as in case a man should to his theft add murder, that law which forbids the putting a thief to death would not save him. But the reason and cause is added, why the Father of the Family would not have the tares pluckt up, *viz.* lest with the tares the wheat also should be plucked up: that is, lest with Heretiques such should be killed as are not Heretiques, but the sons of God. Out of this reason therefore, we must fish for the right interpretation of the Law. Now the most Interpreters conceive, that the danger of the mistake in killing a child of God for an Heretique, lies here, in that he who is an Heretique to day, may hereafter, if he live, repent; and that this is the reason they are not to be killed; which opinion I conceive is well refuted by such as say, that if heed were to be taken unto such repentance, it ought to be as much respected in that old Law concerning Apostates, and such as draw men from the worship of the true God, as in this new Law. And since there was no consideration had of such repentance in the old Law, it is like there was none had in this. Whereunto may be added, that he that is to day an Heretique: If he be in the number of Gods Elect, he cannot be put to death: but that all that is necessary to be known to salvation shall be revealed to him before: if he be none of Gods Elect, there remains no hope of his repentance. So that this seems no just reason, why an Heretique should not be put to death. Now, unlesse there be a respect had unto the repentance of an Heretique, there is no other danger to be feared, but this, that the Magistrate may at one time or another, account him for an Heretique that is not an Heretique, either because not he but the Magistrate is in the error, or if he be in the error and not the Magistrate, the error is not so great that he ought therefore to be accounted an Heretique. And if this be that which the Householder, *viz.* our Lord aimed at, verily he hath peremptorily declared that Magistrates are no fit Judges of doctrines; and hath forbidden them to exercise any such jurisdiction. But if any man shall stil contend, that respect was had to the repentance of the party erring, yet shall he not thereby be able to prove, that no consideration was had of that other reason,

viz. the possibility of mistaking one that is no heretick for an heretick. The Law forbids hereticks to be kild, lest that with the hereticks be kild, such as are not hereticks. By what way or means therefore soever it may come to passe that the one be kild in stead of the other, that way or means may be said to belong unto the Law, as a reason thereof. The Law speaks generally without distinction: so that he w^{ch} will take upon him to distinguish, not having a manifest reason to warrant him; seems to be a guesler rather than an expofitor, and cannot avoid the imputation of Rashnesse. For as much (I say) as the Law speaks generally without any distinction, it must be generally understood without making any difference or distinction. He that shall take so much liberty unto himself, as rashly at his own pleasure to invent distinctions, cannot be said to expound, but by a cunning kind of cavillation to go about to evade the words of the Law. In which respect, and considering the premises, we must conclude, that whether the matter of repentance were considered or not; yet that there was regard had to that error of the Magistrate, whereby he might at one time or another put to death for heretic him that is no Heretique; and consequently, that judgments of this nature pertain not to the Magistrate, nor to any Men, but to the Son of God alone, who at the last day by his Angels will separate the tares from the wheat, and cast them into the Fire. Now, if so be the Magistrate be not a fit judge to discern between him that is an Heretique, that he may kil him, and him that is not an Heretique, that he may spare him; how can he be fit to judge between a sufficient cause to make an Heretique, that is to say, an hereticall tenet, so as that he may under a penalty forbid the same to be taught, and an insufficient cause or tenet not hereticall, so as that he may allow the same? For what is it to know an heretick, but to know the cause which makes an heretick? What other thing is it to err in the knowing of an heretick; but to err in the knowledg of the causes for which men are to be accounted Heretiques? But let us look into the businesse a little more narrowly. For it is certainly manifest from the words of the Householder, that he comanded his servants not to pluck up the tares, &c. that he gave this command not for the sake of the tares, but of that corn which through error might be taken for tares. For his wil was (to speak plainly) that true Hereticks should be spared, that by this means

means

means the safety of the true servants of God might be provided for. He denied unto pious & prudent Magistrates the power of punishing Heretiques; lest by their example ungodly and Imprudent Magistrates should abuse the said power against the pious servants of God. For as much then as, that Law was made for the sake of Gods pious servants, lest at any time by a perverse erroneous judgment, they should be put to death as Heretiques: We must take heed how we allow of any such interpretation thereof; as that, while the Magistrate shall in all appearance be obedient unto the Law, the Law-giver shall notwithstanding misse of his end for which he made the Law. But if so be, the Magistrate shall so interpret the Law, as to conceive, that he ought indeed to spare Heretiques that keep their heresies unto themselves, and endeavour not to perswade others to embrace them; but that he ought to put them to death, if they will teach their errors; shall the safety of the godly be by this means provided for and secured? Surely no. For Laws of Magistrates with such a *Proviso*, as often as the truth shall come to be called heresie, will be the death of Gods servants: For to whomsoever the truth shall be by God revealed, he ought not to bury his talent in the earth, that is to say, he ought not by silence to dissemble the truth to him revealed: But Gods will is, that it should be acknowledged before the sons of Men and revealed. So that it cannot otherwise fall out, but that, if the Magistrate shall, account some good and faithfull servant of God for an Heretique; he notwithstanding any penalty denounced, will endeavour to perswade as many as he can, of the truth of that doctrine, which the Magistrate accounts heresie. Whence it will come to passe, that whereas the Law was made for the good of such persons, none shall receive lesse advantage thereby then they. It must be concluded therefore, that this interpretation can be no wayes agreeable to the intent of the Law-maker, but rather that it is most contrary thereunto. Yet is it not my intent, that godly Magistrates should carry no stroke in the Kingdom of Christ: many other things there are, which they both may and ought to do: As to punish irreverent speeches against God, to punish such as forsake the whole Christian religion, and such as dare to perswade others to forsake the same. If any extemall worshipps are set up, any Images erected, these they ought to abolish; to keep off the violence and injuries of

impious

impious persons from the heads of the godly; to maintain publique peace and tranquility, is their duty, and such like. But for them to assume unto themselves to be judges of the controversies of such men; as submit themselves to the Authority of Gods Word, and make use of the Testimonies thereof; they shall do well to weigh seriously what it is which they assume, and how great a liberty they allow unto themselves. Some there are that suppose, in case the sword shall not be unsheathed, all Religion will soon be lost: howbeit we shall much wrong our Lord, if we suspect that he is asleep, that he cares not at all for his people, or that he cannot preserve his own Gospell without the sword; as if the Word had no mettle or force, but that all a Christians hope were placed in the sword. For if, after that Satan by his enchantments had possessed the world, and himself was become Lord and Ruler; the power of Gods Word was such, that it was able to cast Satan out of his strong and exquisitely-fortified kingdom; shall it not be able to defend the Kingdom of Christ, against the blunted and broken darts of Satan? Let us be of good courage; our Lord doth not sleep but watch. If we shall put all our confidence in him, if we shall fight with his Word, i^t being acted by his Spirit (whom we must obtain by continuall prayers) we shall diligently and prudently avoyd all those policies of Satan, of which we have hitherto treated; verily there will be no cause why we should be afraid of heretiques; let but truth warily enter the combate with Imposture, and she must of necessity at last obtain the victory. Wherefore, if there shall daily appear such as move new questions, raise new controversies, bawle at the Pastors, birk at them, and molest them: let them think thus with themselves: What is Satans drift in all this? Sure he comes in opposition of the truth of the Gospell; but is that all he aimes at? What if so be that this be his aime, and some other greater thing be also by him endeavoured? Namely (and that with thy assistance) that he may lay the foundations of such a tyranny, as he intends, when time shall be, to exercise against the servants of God; wholly to extinguish the Gospel with the professors thereof, and to make himself absolute Lord of the world. Come on then, what wilt thou that boastest of thy care of Gods honour, do in such a case? Thou that pretendest so
much

much to prize the truth of the Gospel, that wouldst be thought to regard nothing but the good of the Church of God? What wilt thou (I say) do in this case? Wilt thou go and joyn forces with Satan? wilt thou hire thy self to serve him, wilt thou supply him with tools, stones and mortar for his building? Wilt thou moile and sweat at the same work with the drudges and slaves of Satan? wilt thou in good deed, that thou must avoid some momentary short troubles, assist Satan today the Foundation of so great a mischief? what if this likewise be by him aimed at, even to wreath out of thy hands those weapons which he most dreads, and to put thee upon the use of such as he fears not a jot, yea, rather which he wholly contemns? Now, without all question, he cares not a rush for swords and such like terrible tools; there is nothing which he more fears, and which he is lesse able to resist then the Word of God. But as soon as the Ministers shal have obtained thus much, that whosoever shal dare to mutter any thing against their doctrine, the Executioner shal presently be called for, which by his halberd or Ax shal resolve all doubts, and untie all knots; what great study of the Scripture will they then use? Doubtlesse they will plainly perceive, that they have small need so to spend their time. For they shal be able to obtrude upon the poor silly people, any thing they can but dream of, and yet nevertheless maintain their dignity and reputation. Wo be to us and to our Posterity, if we shal cast away this weapon wherewith alone we are allowed to fight; wherewith fighting we are alwayes sure of victory. But such (will you say) is the troublesome and impudency of some persons, so insufferable, that they must of necessity be restrained with other kind of weapons, beside the Word. Shal I tel thee what I think of this speech of thine. It is just as if some souldier, presuming to excell all others in military valor, should say, that his enemy fights so eagerly, so stoutly, that he must of necessity throw away his weapons, and become subject unto him. Oh gallant Souldier! What else, I pray you, is Satans endeavor: what would he rather employ himself about, then to excite the wickednesse of men, to provoke the servants of God, with the higest hand of provocation possible? Now, if they shal rigorously prosecute the work of Satan, shal we likewise do that

which he most of all desires. This is it which Satan mainly endeavours, even to wrest away the weapon of the Word from us, and that we may descend into the lists against him; armed with such kind of Ammunition, as he flights and contemnes. Shall we therefore, because Satan labours with might and main to this effect, and brings into the field the fittest soldiers for such a purpose: Shall we, I say, submit unto his wil, and casting away those weapons where-with alone we may win the field; shall we catch hold of such weapons, where-with we shall soon be put to the worse, and which will be turned to our own throats? Nay, but let us hold fast this weapon of the Word of God: Let us fight with this alone, here-with alone let us do our endeavour to slay Satan himself, and all his Emissaries. Let us endeavour to learn all the most convenient ways of striking and warding with this weapon; all the Arts of offence and defence: Of which matter we have already sufficiently discoursed.

And, as it is a thing not appertaining to the Magistrate, to make himself Judge of doctrines, and to use violence towards the Teachers, much lesse does it belong to him to use such violence, at the discretion, and upon the judgement of others. As in case he should commit the care of Religion to certain persons, and be ready himself to draw the sword against whomsoever they shall perswade him, or should arme them to the same effect. How well he will be able to justify his so doing to the King of Kings in that day, which will be very terrible to the wicked, and joyfull to the godly, we may thus judge. Suppose thou thy self being a King, and to go into a far Country, shouldst commit the care of thy Kingdom, Household, and all thy affairs to the fidelity of one of thy servants; and he should delegate the administration of all to some other servants, such as came next to hand, of whose wisdom and faithfulness he had no assurance; yea, or to the fittest that he could chuse; himself in the mean season being busied about matters of the smallest concernment; and when all were like to miscarry, he should suffer the same course to be continued: when thou shouldst come home and take knowledg hereof; couldst thou possibly allow of the doings of that servant of thine? For though thou shouldst find all safe and well, wouldest thou not so account of that servant, as if all things had fallen out crosse and contrary? But what if some very great

great damage, some shameful miscarriage had happened? Of how great punishment wouldst thou judge that servant to be worthy? And is not the Church of God Gods Kingdom, his Inheritance, his Delight and Joy? Is not all the dignity and comeliness of the Church placed in the purity of her Doctrine, and the framing of her Worship, according to the Word of God? And what is there in the Administration of a Kingdom, which in comparison hereunto, is not a very light thing, and of no account? Go to then, how canst thou know that any man is of a right judgment in matter of Religion, so as that thou mayest safely commit thy sword unto his care and trust, unless thou thy self shalt first of all declare, what is to be held therein. But if thou shalt commit affairs of such moment to their fidelity and discretion, whose inner parts thou dost not know: yea, if thou shalt commit them to whomsoever, and thy self minde other matters, what account wilt thou give of thine administration? Especially, if while thou shalt be napping, and nothing minding any such matter, pious doctrine shall be suppressed as impious, and impious doctrine shall be established for pious: so that thence will follow the slaughter of many godly persons taken for hereticks, and the perdition of an innumerable company of people by false doctrine; which people the Son of God made such reckoning of, that he stuck not to lay down his life for them: how severe thinkest thou shall thy sentence be? verily this is my judgment: Whatsoever does any way concern the glory of God, be it, that the liberty of hereticks in spreading false doctrines is to be restrained, or any other thing (as far as the nature of thy office may require or permit thee to act) that cannot be by thee omitted without a great fault; yet will the fault be a thousand times greater, if thou shalt therein make use of another mans knowledg, rather then thy self to use all means possible to understand what ought to be done; and if thou canst not be satisfied in thine understanding, it will be, by much, the safest way to interpose no authority of thine in such a business, either by thy self, or by others. Now, by what more clear example could Magistrates possibly have been admonished, to confide in no mans judgment, then this, in that the Son of God himself by such negligence of the Magistrate, was given up to the judgment, or lust rather of his most unjust enemies? Take ye him (says *Pilate*) and accord-

ing to your law judg him. Take heed thou think not thus with thy self: We live now in a most clear light of the Gospel; now the Pastors are most holy: now all is safe. What? shall we think that Satan snorts and sleeps? And to attempt nothing whereby to lay the foundation of some new Kingdom, whereby to erect some new tyrannies; to hatch some new Monsters? Now that is a known saying, That a small Error at the begining, in the end comes to be of the first magnitude: And inasmuch, as all things of this nature are of very great moment, whatsoever business shall offer it self, I would exhort the Magistrate, That he would by most fervent prayers ask counsel of him who can never deceive, and act nothing unless he were assured that he were in the right. And in case after all, he shall be of this judgment, to think he ought to prescribe what doctrines ought to be taught, and what not; he must at least be very wary, lest Satan do here gain upon him, either by making him to put his own opinion at such a distance from the Hereticks, that while he shun *Charybdis*, he fall into *Scylla*; or to allow the Heretick somewhat which ought not to be granted; or to use such words and phrases, as may occasion some new doctrine, himself intending no such matter; or to establish that doctrine as necessarily to be believed, which himself hath by necessary consequence, to his thinking, drawn from the Scripture, there being, in the mean time, some error in his collection or inference. And to the end, that he may not incur any of those errors or the like, let him examine, how far he is assured of the truth of every point, by such ways as we formerly delivered. Furthermore, it seems to me an excellent Caution, That whatsoever shall be laid down as agreeable to the Word of God, may be expressed with the same words and phrases which the Spirit of God uses in the Scriptures. Otherwise, it is almost impossible, but that the wit of man will intrude some thing of its own; which if it do, an error is committed almost incurable. And heed must be taken, that the Heretick be not declared to hold, or prohibited to teach any other thing, then what he holds and teaches, for the avoiding of such inconveniences as we have before recounted.

One thing there is, which verily I could never understand but to be altogether void of reason; That he who is thought to have taught

taught something false and impious, should be forced to recant, which if he do, he shall not be punished. To what purpose, I pray you, serves this practice? What good is there gotten: if for the avoiding of punishment, against his conscience, an heretick shall recant his opinion? There is onely one thing that may be alledged for it, *viz.* That such as are possessed with the same error and unknown perhaps, will do the like in their own hearts, yea, will counsel others to do the same. That opinion must needs have a very light impression, which can so easily be plucked out of mens mindes. Have we no reason to suspect, that such a recantation is rather for fear of punishment, then from the heart? Will there not rather much heart-burning by this means arise, if the Magistrate shall seem not onely to kill the body, but to plot the ruine of the soul? Are we indeed so ill furnished with weapons to vanquish errors, as to be forced to defend our selves with a lye, to put our trust in Recantations feigned through fear? But some may say: This is not that which we desire, to force men to any kinde of Recantation; but that an heretick may acknowledg his error not so much with his mouth, as with his heart: this were excellent indeed, if thou couldst bring him to it. But what work is there for threats or blandishments in this case? These have some power indeed to prevail with the will. But thy business is with the Understanding, it is changed neither by threats, nor flatteries, or allurements. These cannot cause that, what formerly seemed true, should now seem false, though the party may very much desire to change his judgment. Which if it seem a new and wonderful thing to thee: I shall not need many Arguments to convince thee of the truth thereof. You suppose, that a man may change his judgment when he will, without any new reason to perswade him to think otherwise: I deny that he can so do. Make you therefore an experiment upon your self, and see if you can for the least space of time draw your self to think otherwise then you do in the question between us, so as to make your self believe as I do, That a man cannot change his judgment when he pleases: without question you shall finde that you cannot do it. But take heed you mistake not an imagination for a perswasion; for nothing hinders, but that thou mayest imagine what thou wilt. I pray thee likewise to consider again, That in case thou fear any thing, as for

example, lest some business may not have a good issue, lest something should come to pass much against thy minde, so that thou canst not sleep for the trouble thereof: thou need but change thine opinion concerning such a thing, so as to hope that all will be well, and thy trouble shall be at an end. O most easie and ready medicine, to take away the greatest part of that trouble of minde which men sustain in this life! O short Philosophy! If whatsoever evil a man shall fear may befall him; he may believe (if he will) that it will not come to pass: whatsoever molests a man, because he takes it to be evil (when as oft-times there is no evil in such a thing;) he may perswade himself when he pleases, that it is not evil. But experience shews that none of these things can be done. Wherefore, if an heretick cannot, though he would, cast away his error, unless reason compel him: why trouble you the poor wretch, to make him lye, and so to offend God, yet more and more? Verily, it cannot be denyed, but this was the devils invention, whereby he might compel the servants of God, for fear of punishments to renounce Christ. So that I wonder some men could not perceive as much, though otherwise wise enough. How much better would it be, in case there were no question, but that a man might be put to death for matter of Religion; to deal with him according to Law, whether he recant or recant not, neither to invite him, so much as by a word, to a Recantation, any otherwise than that he may be won to the truth, and his soul saved: which also were to be done not by threatnings, allurements, or through hope, but by the power of Scripture and Demonstrations.

But as for the authority of the Magistrate, herein it is most necessary, not to suffer inmodesty, or delight to rail and reproach, to escape unpunished, in whomsoever they shall be found. If a man must needs hear a reproach, let him hear it where he may make answer, and judicially defend himself; otherwise, the life and name of a man, his conversation and reputation, ought to be out of the danger of any mans tongue, or pen. If there be controversies in Religion, let them contend on both sides with Scriptures and Arguments, but let the Magistrates look to it again and again, that they may under a penalty abstain from whatsoever may tend to provoke one another. This, if they shall do, they shall both render
 the

the Church very quiet, and obtain great praise from all discreet persons. And thus much shall suffice to have spoken of that change of judgment, concerning the doctrine of Religion, in which, they that have imbraced errors, know indeed that they have altered their judgment, but think withal, that they have altered to the better; onely, the adversaries know that it is to the worser part. We shall now discourse, how it may come to pass, that the true doctrine may be adulterated, and we never observe to much: and by what means we may prevent the same.

Satanis Cabinet Counsel.

The fourth Book.

The Argument.

How Doctrine may be corrupted, and yet no change appear. The needless multiplication of doctrines caused through the curiosity of Teachers, is a great means: so is the negligence and ignorance of the people, trusting too much to their Pastors. A double Caution to be used: That no change be made in Doctrine, when it is pure: That in case any change happen, it may be discovered. An excellent way to keep doctrine pure, is to avoid all curious and vain questions; to have the scope of Religion always in our eye; and to express the doctrine thereof in the phrase of Scripture. To discover whether there hath been a change made, we must compare the doctrine of our times, not with that of our Predecessors and Ancestors, but with the doctrine taught in the times of the Apostles. Man would always seem more wary and wise then God, in expressing the points of Religion. The people must frequently be admonished, That the care of Religion, and reading the Word, belongs not to Pastors alone, but to every one that intends to be saved. The restoring of that ancient custom prophesying, one by one in the Congregation, would be an excellent means to discover corruption of Doctrine. Objections against the

use of prophesying answered. If prophesying were restored, there would be less need of such mercenary Teachers, as make a trade of the Ministry. This practice of prophesying was used in the Jewish Church. Our Lord, at twelve years of Age, was suffered to teach among the Doctors, having no Office, and unknown, by the privilege of prophesying. The use of prophesying was continued in Christian societies, till the time of Constantine at the least. How prophesying ought to be regulated. Every one ought to submit to the judgment of the Congregation, and how far. Whether Councils are to be called, and what Authority they have. They may not make new Laws, nor institute new Worships. Men are not bound to submit to their determinations in matters under dispute: Yet there is use of them. An Objection answered. The difference between the Councils of the Apostles, and of those that pretend to succeed them. The determination of a Council must not rashly be rejected. Who ought to sit in Councils.

L I B. I V.

When the Doctrine of Religion shall be depraved; that yet no change be discernable, there are many causes; of which some are in the doctrine it self, others in the manner of the mutation: Some respect those which teach, others those which are taught. In the doctrine it self, there seem to be these: First, that it is an heap, as it were, of many things very unlike one to the other, like so many grains, so that a change may be made by the smallest parts. For look, as if out of some great heap thou shalt daily take certain grains, and put others in their rooms, the heap will seem to continue as it was, though by little and little it be changed, and begin to be another kinde of heap from what it was; even so, forasmuch as the doctrine of Religion consists of many sentences and doctrines very unlike one to the other, though conspiring together, and tending to the same end: Whiles now this doctrine, now that, shall be changed and corrupted, the body of doctrine it self (that I may so speak) seems to retain the same figure, though it be not indeed the same, but in part altered. Yea verily, one onely sentence may be of such weight, that it being depraved

depraved and altered, though no such thing appear, the whole doctrine of Religion may notwithstanding be by that means corrupted: Forasmuch as without that sentence, all the rest of the doctrine may become unprofitable, and of no value. Such an one is that sentence, that, *By the blood of Christ alone shed for us, and his sacrifice offered for our salvation upon the Cross, all our sins are expiated*; which sentence, if thou shalt so change, as to say, That our sins are done away by the merits of our good works, or the intercession of Saints, of a Christian doctrine, thou wilt make one altogether Antichristian. Neither is the doctrine of Religion, in regard that it consists of divers unlike parts, subject to secret mutation, onely by changing and depraving the sentences as we have said, but also by adding some sentences, and taking away others. I do not say, that this depravation can be made secretly in such maner, as to corrupt the Scriptures. For if that were done, the deceit would be manifest: But that in speaking and writing, false sentences may be uttered instead of true, and depraved sentences instead of such as are incorrupt. Now by how much the heap shall be greater, by so much the harder it will be, in case there shall be a change, to observe the same. In which respect, the enlargement of the doctrine helps much to hide any mutation in the same. Now the doctrine of Religion is enlarged, whiles it is variously handled, whiles it is drawn forth into many different questions, which sprout one out of another, and are propagated infinitely. The cause of which mischief is the over-great curiosity of men, their rashness, arrogance and ambition; with which diseases of the minde being madded, we must print and publish whatever we dream of. Yea verily, if we want matter to write, we unrip other mens discourses, and sew them together after a new fashion; and had rather do that which is done to our hand, then be thought to do nothing. Now this is a thing which tends much to the hiding of corruption of doctrine, when as those false sentences which shall be put into the place of the true, shall have the appearance and shew of truth, though indeed they are far from any acquaintance therewith. Which is occasioned divers ways. The first is, when some true sentence in Scripture shall be expressed in such words, as admit divers interpretations, which cannot all be true, and another sentence shall be composed, agreeable to those words

Q

misunderstood;

misunderstood; for by this means, while a very different thing is spoken, the same thing which is in the Text, seems to be said without any change. In like manner, when a Text is figurative, so that one thing is meant indeed, another thing seems to be meant, and a man shall take it in the seeming sense without any regard to the figure. As if a man should say, That in case any mans sight be an occasion of sinning, he ought to pluck out his eyes, and wholly blinde himself, because it is written, *If thine eye shall offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee.* For these words do at the first sight seem to say as much, whereas their sense is very different, viz. Whatsoever may slacken or stop a mans progress in the way of the Gospel, he ought to abandon that thing forthwith; for that it is better to be without that thing, then being thereby hindered in such a course, to lose the Kingdom of Heaven, and to be adjudged to eternal tortures. In like manner; if, when the meaning of a Text shall be according to the letter, the words are so expounded, as if they meant otherwise. As is practised upon these words, *Go and shew thy self unto the Priest*, from which, this sentence is drawn, *Every man must confess his sins to a Priest.* Another means whereby a false sentence seems to be true, is, when in the true sentence there is somewhat contained, either expressly or implicitly, and the false sentence shall be expressed in such terms, as exclude that thing so contained. (The thing we speak of, so contained, is either an exception, or a condition, or a circumstance, or some explanation.) Of some condition or exposition, suiting not with the Text, shall be added. Those words of the Apostle, have questionless an exception or a condition, *Be not deceived, neither whoremongers, nor idolaters, shall attain the Kingdom of Heaven,* for we must understand that condition, unless they repent. Now if any man should say, That the sin of uncleanness could not be pardoned, he should speak that which were agreeable to the words indeed, but far from the scope and purpose of that Text. In like sort, those words of Solomon need an exposition, *The condition of man and beast is the same,* as these did, so do they, both die alike, neither is a man better then a beast. Now the exposition to be understood is, that thus it is not absolutely, but for ought which a mans reason

reason can observe to difference them. Which exposition being excluded, he that shall press the words of *Solomon*, shall pluck up all Religion by the roots. Those add unto the true sentence of Scripture, who say, That those shall obtain eternal life, who believe that their sins are forgiven for Christs sake, provided they shall recount all their sins unto the Priest, and obtain absolution from him. He changes somewhat of the true sentence, who says, That the Law is therefore holy, because the knowledg thereof makes a man holy: for it is not therefore holy, but because it makes a man to despair of his own strength, and brings him unto Christ, the onely means of salvation, and because it shews what things please or displease God; to the end, we may worship him, not after our own inventions and constitutions, but according to his command. A third means, whereby a false sentence is thrust into the doctrine of Religion, appearing to be true onely, instead of that which is true indeed, is, when from some true sentence a false one is by a wrong inference collected, which collection shall be used in place of the true one, from which it was drawn. So, when the Bishop of *Rome* hath gathered out of those words, *Whatsoever thou shalt binde on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever shall be loosed by thee on earth, shall be loosed in heaven*: this sentence, That he hath power to make new laws, and to constitute new heads of doctrine, or as they call them, new articles of Faith, and to compel men to keep and observe the one, and to believe the other: This collection or inference of his, he makes account of, as of a sentence of Scripture. Now there is a kinde of false inferences or collections, very hidden and obscure; forasmuch, as they are partly drawn from suppositions, which are neither expressed, nor perhaps once thought of by the collectors; yet are such collections admitted without any question, even as if they did arise out of most certain and clear grounds. This may be seen in that collection we last named: For, that it may be infered, That power to make laws was given to *Peter*, it is requisite, that the word *binde* should signifie to make laws: For so you shall rightly collect; to binde is to make laws, power of binding is given to *Peter*, and consequently of making laws: In like maner you may collect; to loose

loose, is to repeal laws : now power to loose, was given to *Peter* ; therefore, power to abrogate laws was given to him. And since it is said, Whatsoever thou shalt bind and whatsoever thou shalt loose ; it will follow, that *Peter* may make or revoke what laws he please ; yea the Ten commandments he may abrogate, if he think fit : Again, That all this may appear to belong to the Pope : another supposition must be made, *viz.* Whatsoever authority was given to *Peter* , the same is given to the *Roman Bishop* ; since therefore *Peter* had authority given him to make or abrogate what laws he please , the same authority is given to the *Roman Bishop*. But this conclusion is infered , without any mention of those suppositions ; That to binde, and to loose, is to make, and revoke laws ; and that, Whatever authority was given to *Peter*, is given to the Bishop of *Rome*. Neither is every man able to mark in the making of such collections, what that is which is omitted and passed over with silence , as out of all question true, though it be indeed as false as false may be. Furthermore, easie it is for any to understand , That the obscurity of sentences or doctrines of Religion, is a cause, that if any mutation be made, it cannot easily be discerned. Now the obscurity of Christian doctrine , springs from these grounds : First, because it handles the things of the spirit , and therefore cannot be understood without the spirit : which spirit being wanting, though there be a great corruption of doctrine, yet can it not be discerned. Another ground is, because, being written in one tongue , we are forced to learn it in another tongue, into which it is not very aptly translated. And although a man should give himself to study the Hebrew and Greek ; yet seeing they are not now used by any Nation, but have their Being onely in Books , he will never be able to learn them so perfectly, but that the proper signification and various use of many words and phrases, will be hid from his knowledg. Howbeit, this obscurity we speak of, is not so great, but that where some portion of the Spirit is present, those things at least which are necessary to be known for salvation , may easily be understood. And so much for the causes of not discerning a change in doctrine, which are in the doctrine it self ; we are now to handle such Causes as are in the maner of the change.

Now

Now the manner of the change makes it undiscerned, for as much as the change is made by little and little, for, if so be, as we said before, out of some great heap of grain, every day some few grains should be taken; and as many of another sort be put in the room of them, who could be able to discover the mutation? Who is able to discern how much it is that a boy grows daily, or how much a man declines and waxes old? Now the very self-same thing is to be seen in the mutation of doctrine: for we shall have a man, to day suppose, who if he take no other change, will at least invent some general name, for to call such things by, as agree in nature or in some common reference or respect, which name will be afterward applied to things very different, and it shal by this means come to passe, that the nature and notion of the former things will be obscured: thus did they that first called the holy washing, and the Supper of our Lord, *Sacraments*. What hurt could anyone so much as suspect from so small a matter? Howbeit, in proceess of time, there were those, who supposing that any sacred and holy rite was intended by the terme *Sacrament*, began to give that name to laying on of hands, Marriage, Penitence, Confirmation, Extreme Unction: Whence it is come to passe, that Baptisme, and the Supper, having a name common to them, with other things of much different nature; their true notion is rendred, dark and obscure. For there remained with the general name, a notion in like manner general and common to those other things: whereas, the proper notion, which ought ever to be kept in mind, is forgotten. Hence also it came to pass, that as it was manifest, that baptism and the Supper were ordained by our Lord: So was it commonly believed, that all those other things termed Sacraments, were in like maner by him instituted. At length Bels began to be baptised: which practise, what else did it, but occasion the simple people to think, that the baptism of men was of the same importance with that baptism they saw practised upon the Bels; whereby, the memory of the washing away of sins by the blood of Christ, signified by the washing with water, was abolished? Now, this makes much to hide the coufenage and deceit, when there is a colourable pretence: So as the innovators may seem not to bring in any new thing; but to desire the preservation of doctrines, received by some weak ceremony and observation. Wherefore, when the first Christians, or

rather

rather those which succeeded the first, growing very remiss, in respect of their former heat of piety (which is commonly seen when men cease to be exercised by afflictions) and so growing less frequent in the exercise of breaking of bread: some one peradventure there was who judged it a very good course, that the Priest at least, should frequently receive the bread and wine in the presence of the multitude: and by so doing, celebrate the memory of the Lords death: for as much as it would be all one in a manner, as if the by-standers had all of them communicated and participated thereof. In which practise, truly a man would not think there was any innovation, but only a care shewed to preserve so wholesome an ordinance of our Lord from growing quite out of use, which being grown into a custom; forasmuch as it was done wholly to commemorate that sacrifice which our Lord offered for us upon the Cross; and the term of Priest was not wanting, it gave occasion to some, to attribute the name of the thing signified to the thing signifying, so as to call this performance now no longer the commemoration of a sacrifice, but a sacrifice it self. Afterward, when it had obtained the name of sacrifice, who will wonder that it began to be accounted a sacrifice? And so whiles every day there was innovation made, yet inasmuch as it was little which was changed, and some very goodly pretext was ever in readiness, the innovation could not be perceived; so that at length, the most plain and simple institution of our Lord, concerning breaking of bread, was by a wonderful metamorphosis changed into that most pompous and laborious business of the Mass. And who so shall diligently consider, will easily observe that the like hath happened touching all other points. In those that are the Teachers, in case they corrupt any point, the main cause why such their corruption is not discerned, is the great opinion which men have of their piety, holiness, and learning, and their being thought to stand very much affected to the doctrine received. Now such an opinion as this with the people, a man attains, either by giving some eminent proof of himself, or by the testimony of such men as are of greatest repute, or by right, as it were, of inheritance. He gives a good proof of himself, who does acutely and fluently discourse of matters divine, and by often citing the Scriptures, and to good purpose, shews himself well versed in such studies: but especially,

if

if he shew himself an eager opposer of such doctrines as the people abhor, and a great honour and reverencer of such persons, as the people highly account of: Now the testimonies of men approved beget a good opinion in the people, because men are persuaded, That in regard of their gravity and prudence, they will witness nothing, but that whereof they have a certain knowledge, whereas notwithstanding it is very often seen, that by simulation, flattery, and other arts, the over great facility of good men is so overcome, and wrought upon, as that they may be brought to commend such persons, of whose piety and learning they have small knowledge. In the mean time, however their testimonies are drawn from them, yet the simple common people do yield thereunto no less credit, then if they were oracles. Some men gain a good opinion of themselves, as it were by right of inheritance, when as they succeed in place, such persons whose life and doctrine have been very much approved of. For it seems a likely thing, That none but good men should be put into the place of good men; and so the reputation of honesty and learning is transfered from the one to the other, even as inheritances pass from the Father to the children. Nevertheless, even as those who from a low and mean estate, have by great labors and difficulties attained great wealth, leave their children, heirs of their goods indeed, and all their possessions, but not of their industry and wit; forasmuch as being born in the midst of wealth, they finde no need to exercise their wit: even so those men who are at certain seasons, stirred up by the providence of God to purge the Church from errors, since they cannot but be exercised with great and knotty difficulties, they must be of necessity armed with very excellent virtues, and so become famous; whereas their successors, matters being reduced into order and composed, and Satan dealing now no longer by force, but by craft and policy (which they are not aware of) they meet with no considerable occasions to exercise their piety and prudence. Yet nevertheless, though they be far inferior in virtue, yet in outward appearance, as they hold the place of their predecessors, so do they retain their dignity and reputation: and by how much the farther you descend from those first, so much the more unlike shall you finde their successors, and the more estranged from their virtues. And forasmuch as the same or greater authority abides, with very little piety, prudence, learning,

ing, and hearty diligence; who sees not, how easily it may come to pass, That they may daily, through unskilfulness, corrupt many points, and no man discern the same by reason of their authority and reputation? And to the end, that suchlike Pastors may by little and little be brought into place, by whose means, Satan hopes to procure a greater and speedier corruption of doctrine; it is a great furtherance, if so be such things shall be annexed to Ecclesiastical Functions, as shall make them much to be desired: as for Pastors to be highly esteemed of, to have all men rise unto them, and give them place; if they shall be well accommodated and live in abundance of wealth; if they shall be accounted such as ought to censure all, and themselves not to be questioned, without impiety and wickedness. For who is there that would not exceedingly desire to be in such a condition? So that in case there be these allurements and the like, as soon as any place shall be vacant, take heed of thinking that some excellent person shall obtain the same: he will soonest obtain it, that does best know how to beat the bush that can sue for it with greatest art. A good and godly man, though he conceive he may honestly seek it, as minding onely the glory of God, and not his own honor or profit; yet for this cause he will not sue for it, forasmuch as those that are truly pious, being most of all conscious of their own weakness, which is always great enough, have a modest opinion of themselves, and account themselves inferior almost to every one. And if so be the times prove yet so good, as that offices are bestowed, not upon those that hunt after them, but upon choice and qualified persons: yet shall not the best men, even at such a time, always meet with best quarter. Inasmuch as men void of all craft, and enemies to all bad arts, taking more pains to be good indeed, then to seem to be so, are easily in the gaining of an estimation of holiness, out-striped by crafty fellows, ambitious of honor and dignity. For they will not so cunningly hide their own infirmities, they will take more pains to be rid of, then to hide their vices, they will not use any policies to procure the favor of men. He that is ambitious of honor, will most carefully hide all his vices: he will most diligently addict himself to whatsoever he understands, those men do most approve of who are able to promote him; and will never leave until, by simulation, dissimulation and flattery, he have gained their approbation to the full.

full. And by this hidden and more cunning and painful kinde of faing, sometimes wicked persons prevail as much, as they could do, were they allowed to use an open and free trade.

It remains, that we speak of such causes of the not perceiving, that a change of doctrine is introduced, as consist in the persons that are taught. Now they are chiefly two, carelesnes and ignorance. Carelesnes for the most part ariseth hence, In that the people trust too much to their Pastors; and perswade themselves, that they will not slip into any error, and that therefore they have small need to have an eye over them, but that they are bound rather to embrace whatsoever they shall hold forth, without any curious examination. Hereunto may be added many other businesses, whereunto men addict themselves: For that saying is of large extent, *Where mens treasure is, there is their heart*, and that other, *No man can serve two masters*. Now, how it may come to pass that after a people hath once had a great knowledg of divine Truths, the said knowledg may as it were vanish away, besides that cause which hath been even now alleadged, we shall in another place make discovery of some other reasons. We shall for the present adde onely this one; That the people themselves are in a perpetual kinde of mutation, some daily dying and departing, others succeeding and growing up in their stead. Whence it comes to pass, That since the change which is made in every age, is small, either the people cannot perceive it; or if they do observe it, yet they esteem it not of such moment, as to think fit to move any difference thereabout. This thing also is of very great force, to keep the people from taking notice of a change in doctrine; when men shall perswade themselves, that they are not able to judg of matters of Religion, as though *it is, it is not*, and other words used in Scripture, do not signifie the same which they do in common discourse, or as if nothing could be understood, without some great knowledg in the Tongues and Arts or Sciences, and as if the power of the Spirit were of no efficacy without these helps. Whereby it comes to pass, that whiles they think they understand not even those things which in some sort they do understand, being expressed in most clear and evident words; they do at length arrive to that blockishness, that they cannot understand them indeed; so that, though they have before their eyes a sentence of Scri-

R

pture

pure so clear, that nothing can be more evident; yet if they to whose authority they in all things subject themselves, shall say any thing point-blank opposite thereto, they will give credit unto them, and imagine themselves not to see that which they see as clear as the light. And by these means verily it comes to pass, That when the doctrine of Religion is corrupted, the mutation is not discovered: Furthermore, when the doctrine is once begun to be changed, it must needs be, that out of one error another should spring, and propagate infinitely; and God, for just reasons of his own, blinding them, men bring upon themselves so great darkness, and slip into such foul errors; That if God out of mercy open a mans eyes, and let him see those errors he lives in, he can scarcely believe himself, or be perswaded that he was ever enveloped with such blinde errors. Which thing is as true, and as well to be seen in men of greatest learning and experience. If thou shalt thoroughly peruse the writings of some of the Schoolmen (as they call them) thou shalt in some places meet with so much acuteness, as will make thee admire. Thou shalt see them oftentimes cleave a fine thread into many parts, and accurately anatomise a flea, and a little after fall so foully, and avouch such absurdities, That thou canst not sufficiently stand amazed; wherefore we must obey that advice of the Poet.

*Principiis obsta, sero medicina paratur,
Cum mala per longas invaluere moras.*

Resist betimes; that Medicine stays too long,

Which comes when age has made the grief too strong.

Now there is need of a double Caution: *viz.* That there be no change made in the doctrine, when it is pure: And if any change be made, that there be notice taken of it. Now look what change is made in this kinde, all the blame is laid upon those whose office it is to instruct the people; for though themselves are the authors of the change, yet will the people impute it to the Ministers sleepiness, and want of care at least. It concerns therefore the Pastors and Teachers to be Eagle-eyed, and to be very well acquainted with those causes, whereby the change of doctrine becomes undiscovered, and to have them at their fingers ends, and to be wary, that on no hand they may miscarry. Now it will be an excellent

caution

caution for the keeping of doctrine pure, if they shall avoid all curious and vain controversies; If they shall set before their eyes, the scope and end of all religious doctrine, and likewise a series or catalogue of all such things, as make to the attainment of that end (of which we formerly spake;) if they shall affect not only the matter it self, but also the words and phrases which the holy Ghost in Scripture makes use of, and exceedingly suspect all different forms of speaking. Not that I would have them to speak nothing but Hebrews; for so their language would not be plain nor intelligible; but I wish that they will shun all such expressions, as have been invented by over-nice disputants, beyond what was necessary to express the sense of the Hebrew and Greek, and all those tenets which men by their own wits do collect and infer from the Scriptures. Now of what concernment this will be, we may gather by this instance: The Papists think it one and the same thing to say, *The Church cannot erre*; and to say in the words of our Lord, *Wheresoever two or three shall be gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them*. Yet is the difference very great, which may thus appear; forasmuch as in case any one shall conceive the Church to be the Pope, Cardinals, and Bishops anointed by the Pope: he hearing the aforefaid sentence, will judge, that whatsoever they shall decree, ought to be of force. But if he shall rather munde the words of our Lord, and shall consider that those kinde of men, do regard nothing but their own commodity, wealth and dominion; he will be so far from so understanding them, that peradventure, not being able to allow the deeds and practises of these men, he will come to hope from those words, That if himself with some other good men, loving God with their whole heart, shall come together, and unanimously implore the assistance of God, shall be better able to determine what it is that ought to be believed and practised for the attainment of salvation, then if they should persist to put their confidence in such Pastors. Now this rule, That the words of the Scripture ought to be used rather than any other, is then especially to be observed, when any thing is delivered as a certain and tryed truth, or as a rule of faith or life, or out of which any other thing is to be inferred. For in expositions and explanations, as there is need haply of greater liberty, so is there less danger if it be taken.

For, when as the word of God, and the exposition thereof, are at one and the same time both together in view, as it were; there no man can be ignorant, that the exposition is the word of man, so that he may reject it, in case it seem impertinent. And look by what means a man may hinder the doctrine of Religion from being changed, by the self same he may finde whether it be changed or no. Now every man ought to compare the doctrine of that age wherein he lives, with no other doctrine then that which was out of question spotless, which is the doctrine of the Apostles. Wherefore, notwithstanding that in our age the Gospel is as it were revived, yet ought not any man thus to think, That he ought to examine whether the Gospel hath lost any of that purity wherunto it had at this time arrived; he ought rather to look again and again, whether some corruption do not yet remain, whether it be not in some part, as yet not sufficiently restored to its ancient purity and lustre: and confidently perswade himself, That he cannot be (that I may so speak) sufficiently superstitious, in rejecting every word which is not in the Scriptures. Forasmuch as man will ever be more wise and wary then the holy Spirit, and can very hardly forbear to mingle somewhat from his own head: so that whatever comes from man, can never be sufficiently suspected. And because a thing will be so much the better preserved, by how much the greater is the number of those that keep it: the people ought often to be put in minde, That both the reading of the Scriptures, and the care of Religion, belongs not to the Pastors of the Church onely; but that every one that would be saved ought to make diligent search, whether any corruption be already, or is for the future like to be introduced; and this to do no less carefully, then if he were perswaded that all beside himself were asleep: and whatsoever is wont to take the common people off from such studies, care must be taken that that thing be wholly taken away. Concerning which matter, we shall more conveniently discourse anon.

Now, forasmuch as the profit will be small, if some private man shall observe that an error is introduced, unless he discover the said error, and lay it open: there must of necessity be some way how this may conveniently be done. Now there cannot be a more fitting way, then that which Apostle propounds to the *Corinthians*.

Let

Let two or three Prophets speak, and let the rest judg; and if any thing be revealed to him that sits by, let the former be silent. For ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be exhorted. If some one person shall always speak in the Church, and no man at any time may contradict him; it will be a very strange thing, if that one man be not puffed up, if he do not fall into such a conceit of himself, as to think that he is the onely man, that he onely hath understanding, he alone is wise: that all the rest are a company of brute animals as it were, who ought to depend onely upon him, and to do nothing but learn of him. And if any man shall think, that himself likewise hath some ability to teach, he will account that man an hainous offender. But what says the Apostle to this? Did the word of God come from you? or came it unto you onely? If any seem to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge what I write unto you to be the commands of the Lord. But if any one be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore brethren, labor that ye may prophecy, and forbid not to speak with tongues, let all things be done decently, and in order. It is exceedingly to be lamented, That this custom, and the practice of this command of the Lord, is not again restored into the Churches, and brought into use. But some men may say; Such is the rashness of this age of ours, such the boldness, such the impudence, That if it were allowed to every one to speak in the Congregation, there will be no end of brawls and contention. Why so? Is a man another kinde of creature now, then what he was of old? Thou wilt say, he is. For mankinde hath continually degenerated, grown worse and worse, and seems now to have attained the top of corruption. Is it so indeed? But, suppose it to be so. Thou that art the Teacher of the people, art not thou also thy self made of the same mold? Art not thou born in the same age? Inasmuch as this ordinance principally was intended to keep Pastors within the bounds of modesty: that they may understand, That they are not the authors of the Word of God, that they have not alone received the Spirit: by how much the more mankinde hath degenerated, by so much the greater peed is there thereof; for, that there is now more rashness, arrogance, pride, then of old; this is true, as well of the Pastors and Teachers, as of the rest of the people. Art thou a Prophet, hast thou any portion of the Spirit? If thou hast not,

so unfitting it is, that thou alone shouldst speak in the Congregation, that there will hardly be found any that desires rather to be silent, than thy self. But if thou art a prophet, if thou hast the Spirit, mark what the Apostle says, *Acknowledg* (quoth he) *that those things which I write, are the commandments of the Lord.* Go to then, On the one side we have the judgment of our Lord, willing that prophecy (for this is a word that we are obliged to use) should be common to all, and that not for the destruction, but the salvation of the Church: On the other side, we have thy judgment, who fearest lest that may breed contentions and confusion; whose judgment now ought we rather stand to? If thou shalt conceive we must stand to thine: consider what thou assumest unto thy self, and what will become of thy modesty. Our Lord, it should seem, understood not what a kinde of creature man was; he wanted thy wisdom, b-like, to admonish him of the danger; or haply he thought not upon that corruption which should befall mankind, whereby such a Liberty might prove unprofitable. But *Paul* answers thee, *That God is not the author of contention, but of peace:* Who well knowing what might move contentions, what beget peace, and not loving nor willing to have contention, but peace, willed that this liberty of prophesying should be in the Church. What canst thou say to the contrary, what hast thou to object against God himself, wilt thou accuse him of indiscretion? No man hath so wicked a tongue, as to dare to do it. Yet if thou shalt diligently search thine heart, thou shalt finde there a certain disposition ready to contend even with God himself: Which motion of thy heart, must by no means be hearkened unto, but sharply repressed, and wholly subjected to the Spirit of God. It may seem peradventure an absurd thing, That after some very learned person hath spoken, some contemptible person shall be allowed to contradict him. Can such a person so do without great rashness and temerity? Were I to speak according to the judgment of man, verily I could not deny it. But if we be really perswaded, That the knowledge of matters divine, ought not to be attributed to our watching, studies, wits, but to God and to his Spirit, wherewith he can in a moment endue the simplest person in the world, and that with no more labor

labor or difficulty, then if he were to give him unto one that had spent *Nestors* age in study: What reason is there for me to judge that this man does rashly and unadvisedly, if he shall arise and contradict? Is not the spirit able to reveal somewhat to him, which he hath hidden from thee? Now, if the spirit have revealed somewhat to him, and to that end revealed it that he might contradict, that by his means the thing may be revealed to the Church: Shall I say that he hath done rashly in obeying the holy Ghost? And if thou think other wise, verily thou art not perswaded that the Spirit is the Author and Teacher of this Knowledge, but that all the praise thereof is due to studies, watchings, and the wits of men. And if this be thy judgment, I tell thee again, That thou art not onely unworthy to be the sole speaker, but worthy rather to be the onely person not permitted to speak in the congregation. And that thou mayst the better understand, that the most unlearned ought to be allowed to speak, consider, God will have himself to be acknowledged the Author of his own gifts: he will not have his praise attributed unto our studies or wits, but unto himself. But if the man that hath spent all his life in study, speak wisely, it is not attributed to God, but to study: In word perhaps it may be attributed to God, yet not without a vehement reluctancy of our judgment: and this is that which (I say) God will not abide. But if so be thou shalt hear a wise word come out of the mouth of some unlearned person, thou must needs, whether thou wilt or no, acknowledge God to be the Author thereof. So, when God was minded to give unto *Israel* a victory against the *Midianites*, under the conduct of *Gideon*; and *Gideon* had gathered together Thirty thousand men, lest the *Israelites* should boast that they had gotten the victory by their own strength, and not by the assistance of God (which might have been conceived, if *Gideon* had fought with so numerous an Army) he would not suffer him to have above Three hundred, that it might appear that he was the cause of the victory, and not the number or valor of those that fought. Now, besides the glory of God, hereby great profit does accrue to the Church. For if the people shall see now one man, now another, endued with the spirit, beyond all expectation; many will thereby be encouraged to hope

for the same gift, if they shall ask it; many will learn and profit; and it will thereby come to pass, that when occasion shall be to choose a Minister, the Church shall not need to call strange and unknown persons to that office, but she may have of her own such as are fit to be chosen, men whose conversation and manners are sufficiently known. And when the number of such as are able to prophecy, shall be great, the Church will not be forced to use such Pastors as from their very childhood have proposed to themselves such offices as the reward of their studies; and addicted themselves to the study of Scripture and Religion, no otherwise then they would have done to some Trade, whereby they meant in time to get their living: So that a man can expect but very few of them to prove other then mercenary or hireling Pastors. Now, that it was the custom of the Jewish Church, that all might thus prophecy, we may hence conjecture, in that it is upon Record, *Luke 4.* how our Lord, upon the Sabbath day according to the custom, came into the Synagogue, took a book and expounded a place of Esay; and how, being twelve years of age he sat at Jerusalem in the temple among the Doctors, and did dispute. For he could not so do by vertue of any ordinary office, forasmuch as his age was incapable, neither did the Doctors know who he was. Yea rather, our Lord in so doing must needs make use of the power which was granted to every one to speak. It remained in the Christians Congregations until the times of Constantine, at the least. Forasmuch as we have these words of Eusebius, the Writer of Church-affairs, to that effect: *If any man inspired by the grace of God, should speak unto the People; they all with great silence fixing their eyes upon him, gave such attention, as if he had brought them some errand from heaven.* So great was the reverence of the hearers, such order was seen among the Ministers. One after another, another after him. Neither was there onely two or three that prophesied, according to what the Apostle said, but to all was given to speak; so that the wish of Moses seems rather to have been fulfilled in them, when he said, *Would God all the people might prophecy.* There was no spleen, no envy, the gifts of God were dispensed, every one, according to his ability, contributing his assistance for the confirmation of the

Luke 4.

*Eccle. hist.
lib. 9.*

the Church : And all was done with love, in such sort, That they strove mutually to honor each other, and every one to prefer another before himself. But to the end this common prophesying may be profitable to the Church, we must diligently mark what the Apostle advises. For a sure thing it is, that the pride of man is so great, that whatever hath once fallen from him, he will by any means have it stand for a Truth, neither can he suffer that any man should infringe the same. So that if he might be permitted to judge, that last spake, it will be a miracle, if a man in his life-time should see any one give way to him that contradicts him : What is *Pauls* advice therefore in this case ? *Let two or three Prophets speak, and let the rest judge.* He will not therefore have the same persons to be parties and judges. And he adds a little after, *And the spirit of the Prophets is subject to the Prophets, for God is not the Author of dissention, but of peace.* So that as soon as any man hath spoken his own mind, he ought to rest himself satisfied with the judgment of the rest, and not obstinately to make no end of contending : if this be not done, a sure thing it is, there will be no end of strife. But what if any man will not be content to submit to the judgment of the rest : Verily I would avouch, that being sharply admonished, that he disturb not the Congregation, and that he go not against the command of the Apostle, or rather of our Lord, commanding the spirits of the Prophets to be subject to the Prophets ; he ought to be cast out of the society, though he should hold the prime place in the Congregation. The people likewise must frequently be admonished ; that liberty for any one to speak in the Congregation, is not therefore granted by the Apostle, to the end every one should speak what comes to his tongues end, as if he were in a market : but whereas he gives liberty to him to speak to whom any thing is revealed, he would have all rashness and impudence to be laid aside. He that reverences not the Church of God, let that man know, he despiseth the Spirit of God, who is President there ; and shall be sure not to escape unpunished. Before a man propounds any thing to the Church, he ought to consider again and again, how sure a manifestation he hath of that thing, and what ever the matter be, let him be sure not to forget a sober, modest, bashful behavior,

S

without

without which vertues, doubtles no good can be effected. But here we must attentively consider, both how far a man ought to submit to the judgement of the Congregation, and who may deservedly be accounted a troubler of the Church. Verily, I conceive a man ought so far to give way, as that after I have alledged what I had to say for my opinion, if yet the rest shall not allow of my judgment, I ought to give over defending of it, and cease to be troublesome to the Congregation concerning the same. But I ought not to be compelled to confesse that I have erred, or to deprecate any fault, whiles I do not yet understand that I have erred, for so I should sinne against God. He therefore is a troubler of the Church, that will not, so far as we have expressed, submit to the judgment of the Church, but goeth on to be troublesome; but especially that man who would exact of another that which he ought not to do; viz. to recant, being not perswaded that he is in an error. But those men are commonly reputed troublers of the Church, who refuse to ratifie what ever shall any wayes fall out of the Pastors mouths. Again, in this place it may reasonably be demanded, whether, when that a matter hath been once or twice debated, and some man knowing the judgment of the Congregation, would again reduce it into Controversie, he ought to be heard, or enjoyned silence, and take the matter for determined. But of this we shall in another place more conveniently dispute. That which remains, therefore, is, that we wrastle with God, by daily prayers, to grant that we may have the use of this so soveraign and saving liberty, so profitable to the Church, and that thereby we may reap abundance of fruit. And that he would, to that end, tame and break our spirits with his Spirit, and render them milde and gentles, and not suffer what he hath ordained for the confirmation and establishment of his Church, to be by the stubbornnesse and perversities of our wits and minds, turned to the mischief and destruction thereof. Now it hath been frequently practised, that when some difficult point hath been to be decided, not only one particular Church should judge, but a Councell of that Province, or of the whole Christian world hath been called. Which, whether it ought to be done or no, and what ought to be the Authority of Councels, may be by some demanded. That the custom of calling

Councels

Councels ought to be retained, seems clearly to me, to be taught by the example of the Apostles. For, if it were requisite for men endued with so great a measure of the Spirit, to confer together about matters of Religion in controversie: It seems, that it ought much more to be practised by those that have not such a portion of the Spirit: Neither ought we to make light account of our Lords promise, who hath engaged himself, that where two or three shall be gathered together in his Name, there he will be the in midst of them. But the question moved concerning the authority of such a Councell, is harder. And for as much as I have not now to deale with Papists, but with such as would have the truth of the Gospel restored; I shall not need with many words to demonstrate, that no Council hath authority either to make new Lawes, or to ordain new worships. But what shall we say concerning controversies of Religion, which are raised about interpretation of Scripture? Whether or no, hath a Council authority, in such cases, to determine what ought to be held? And if a Council cannot do thus much at least, what other use there can be of Councils beside? And whether there be any difference between the Council of the Apostles, and those of their successors? If, as certain as it is that our Lord will always perform what he hath promised, so certain it were that such as meet to consult, would evermore refer all their cogitations to the glory of God, and place all their hope of discovering the Truth in the promises of our Lord, and the direction of his Spirit: there were no reason, but that all the determinations of Councils should be accounted firm and authentick. But forasmuch as these are the secrets of mens mindes and hearts, God onely can know them. And inasmuch as these conditions which are annexed to our Lords promise, are hidden, the conscience, in this case, hath nothing certain to rest upon. Make it appear to me, that a company, either of Bishops, or any other men, are met together in the name of Christ; I shall willingly stand to their determinations; but how wilt thou make it appear, that they are so met? Because themselves profess so much; as if a company of ungodly dissemblers would not say as much concerning themselves. Doubtless it is no ways likely, that God hath imposed such a law upon us; as one time or another, whether we do obey it, or not

obey it, will render us guilty. But such a law were imposed upon us, in case we were bound to obey a Council, and in the mean time, either the Council may erre, or in case it do erre, our obedience shall not finde excuse before God. But, that Councils may erre we doubt not; yea verily, nothing is more sure, then that Councils have often erred. And if we shall give obedience to the impious determination of a Council, sure we are, that no Text of Scripture will excuse us: yea rather, we are strictly admonished not to give credit so much as to an Angel from Heaven, if he would teach us any thing besides what hath been delivered by the Apostles. For the holy Scriptures are set before us, out of which we are to know the will of God: Which that we may understand, we are taught to pray to God for wisdom, and the holy Ghost; that we should rest in the determinations of Councils, there is not a word, that I know, in Scripture, to warrant us. Now, if so be our obedience to Councils, in case they determine any thing amiss, shall not be excused: neither have we any assurance that Councils never erre: Neither may it be said, that God hath subjected us unto such a law, whereunto one time or another we can neither obey, nor not obey without sin: It follows, that none ought to be compelled to stand to the determinations of Councils. Now since it is all one to say, that a Council hath authority to judge of controversies of Religion, or to say, that every man ought to obey whatever a Council shall decree; and since we have shewed that there is no Law binding men to give such obedience, it follows, That a Council hath no such authority to judge in matters of Religion. It may further be demanded, what we say concerning him who is called to the office of a Teacher? whether he ought wholly to obey a Council, so as to teach nothing different from the Councils determinations? It were an absurd thing doubtless, for a man to be bound to teach that unto others, which he himself cannot safely believe: or shall he be more excused, if he follow the impious determination of a Council in his teaching, then if he himself for his own particular, embrace and believe the same? Yea verily much less, for *Paul* will have him to be accursed who shall teach any thing beside what the Apostles have taught; or is he rather then the man that onely believes the Council, but teaches

teaches not, entangled in this gin or trap, That whether he obey or obey not, he must offend? or shall he rather keep himself silent? *Who is me* (says Paul) *if I shall not teach the Gospel*; and Peter says, *We ought rather to obey God than men*. It is manifest therefore, That a Council hath not authority so to judge of controversies, as that men should be bound to obey their decrees. Inasmuch therefore as Councils are to be called indeed, but not to this end, of necessity there must be some other end why they are to be called. If so be therefore Councils shall meet, that the controversies which trouble the Church being propounded, and every one having free liberty to speak, those to whom the Lord shall please to reveal any thing to the clearing of matters propounded, may speak and declare their judgment; and the rest afterwards judge; not so, as to vote, and the greater part to make a Law to necessitate every man to assent (for so the greater part would commonly be too hard for the better) but that every one might weigh what is said; to the end, That if he shall finde it proved by sufficient testimonies of Scripture, he may both embrace it himself, and endeavor to perswade others to embrace the same; not by urging the authority of the Council, but by those Texts of Scripture which he heard alleadged in the Council. Doubtless if those that meet together should make this their aim, although amongst two or three hundred hypocrites there should not be above three or four persons truly pious, who heartily seek the glory of God, and put their confidence in the promises which our Lord hath made, praying to him that he would reveal the truth unto them; they, as few as they be, should not meet in vain, doubtless that so great number of hypocrites, should not cause our Lords promises to become vain and of no force. What should be revealed to one, that would all that were docible embrace; and so Satan should in vain, hope to get the victory by the number and multitude of persons unskilful, and of his masked and disguised subjects, or by the outward dignity of mens persons. There would not then be such a stir to purchase voices and to make up the number sufficient to carry the matter: but the care would be rather, how every man might finde such ground of Truth, as upon which he might safely rely. Verily, we should often see, that even by the

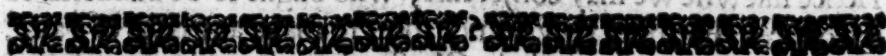
meanest and most contemptible of the company, God would dispel great mists of errors. But so long as most account shall be made of number, and the glistering of outward dignity; so long as the consent of the major part shall stand for a law, nothing is more sure, then that Satan shall ordinarily get the victory and bear away the bel in such Councils. Which way, then, wilt thou say, may a man be excluded the communion of the godly, because of some ungodly tenet which he shall hold? Shall the authority of any particular Church be greater then the authority of the whole or universal Church: so as that the particular may condemn both the tenet and the man, and general or Catholike Church may not? I answer: A particular Church condemning any man, unless their condemnation be just, they do indeed separate that man from themselves, so far forth, as that they do not acknowledg him to be one of them, but they separate him not from Christ: Neither do they pronounce him faulty before God, because he would not credit them to believe as they did: How justly they reject him, let them look to it. But when the Congregation justly rejects, it does not therefore justly reject, because the man will not embrace its tenets, or stand to its judgment: But because he rejects the doctrine which came from God, and that doctrine of such consequence, That it ought of necessity to be known to salvation. Likewise when a particular Congregation, allowes of one tenet, disallowes of another, it does not impose a law upon any mans belief, but onely declares its own faith: to the end, That he which is not of the same minde, at least in the more principal points of doctrine, may know that he belongs not to that society; for there must of necessity be some kinde of Government, that the Congregation may not be forced to communicate in Religious Services, with that man, of whom she is perswaded that he is not any ways related to the Church of Christ, neither hath any right to the priviledges thereof. Hence we may easily understand, and in one word expresse what difference there is between the Council of the Apostles, and those who make themselves their successors, be they who they will. Forasmuch as it was apparent that the Apostles were by name chosen by our Lord himself, to the office of Apostleship, it was manifest that they were endued

endued with a large measure of the holy Ghost, which Spirit would lead them into all truth: Now there is no testimony of any such, concerning any of their successors: We are left only to conjecture what they are, by their words and actions, which are subject to counterfeiting and fraud: In the Councils of the Apostles, men were not to mind, so much, what was judged, and determined, as by whom, it was so determined: So that they needed not with many words to render a reason why they so ordained. Contrariwise in the Councils of their successors, it matters not so much who they are that decree a thing, as what that thing is which they so decree, what testimonies they produce from Scripture, how clearly and manifestly those testimonies do teach the point determined. So, that doctrine of *Luther*, That *We are saved onely by the merits of Christ*, is embraced by us: yet do not we look upon *Luther*, but upon those testimonies which are by him cited from Scripture, which also the holy Ghost, that internal Expositor, witnesses to our spirits, that they teach the same. Otherwise, be they never so many, let them be pious, learned, holy, yea verily, let them be angels of heaven, unless thou shalt perceive that what they affirm is proved by the Word of God; there is no reason for thee to suffer thine eyes to be dazzled with the splendor and pomp of a Council. Howbeit, fitting it is to attribute so much authority to a Council (unless it be of such as are manifestly enemies to truth) as not rashly to reject the judgment thereof; but let every man diligently weigh the same, desiring earnestly the assistance of God, that he may judge aright. Hence likewise we may conjecture, who ought to be admitted to a Council. For, since they do not meet to make any laws of Faith, but rather to pray for the holy Ghost, by whom they may be led into all truth, and in a word, to learn: It will not be necessary, that he that must be admitted, should be a Bishop, or an Archbishop, or a Pope, nor yet that he should be famous for learning; nay rather, no reason there is why any man should be excluded, that appears to be possessed of any measure of piety, and of the holy Ghost. So, we see in that same decree of the Apostolical Council, after the Apostles and Elders, the whole Church is named. For, inasmuch as the holy Ghost is not tied to any dignity, or to any

any certain kinde of persons. Who knows by whom God will
chuse to discover the Truth? And forasmuch as we are not to re-
gard any number of voices, but onely what that is which is said;
although some foolish indiscreet person, or a man that makes one-
ly a shew of godliness shall be admitted, they cannot do much
hurt; for we must count every man to be such as his speech shall
declare him to be. And thus we have declared by what means
the doctrine of Religion comes to be corrupted; and what cauti-
ons we are to use, when it is pure, to keep it so.



FINIS.



Forasmuch as the hol. Ghost is not to be denied, or
et, since the Apostles and Elders, the whole Church is a
Ghost. So we see in that same decree of the Apostolical Coun-
cils, to be dissolved of any measure of piety, and of the holy
rather, no reason there is why any man should be excluded, that
or a Pope, nor yet that he should be famous for learning; may
be that must be admitted, should be a Bishop, or an Archishop,
into all truth and in a word, to learn: it will not be necessary, that
it rather to pray for the holy Ghost, by whom they may be led
Hence like wise we may conjecture, who ought to be admitted to
being carefully the assistance of God, that he may judge a man
to be a fool; but let every man diligently weigh the same, de-
sire manifestly enemies, and easily to reject the judg-
is to attribute to much authority to a Council (unless it be of such
with the splendor and pomp of a Council, wherever, sitting in
God: that is not to be done, to suffer their eyes to be dazzled

ERRATA.

PAge 2. l. 6. is not God. p. 3. l. 6. is to take into, l. 27. disobeys the
 command. p. 6. l. 32. yet is their strength. p. 8. l. 31. self interests,
 p. 18. l. 10. like wise men, l. 22. it is no small. p. 22. l. 5. any time come
 into. p. 30. l. 8. should contend. p. 31. l. 9. the time, place, p. 36. l. 18. to
 that end. p. 37. l. 1. shal set upon the another way. p. 45. l. 15. wonder-
 ful example is that. p. 46. l. 31. best of shepheards. l. 33. to thee weak.
 p. 55. l. 24. be so ingenuous. p. 58. l. 1. 2. one whole sentence; ere his
 mouth be wel open, l. 23. a benefice, p. 65. l. 38. betide others as, p.
 74. l. 20. shal by his 22. the instrument. p. 75. l. 37. accounted of;
 others howbeit. p. 78. l. 33. of our Lord. p. 82. l. 24. ingenuously. l. 38.
 a couple. p. 83. l. 17. is not to, p. 93. l. 7. hereticks in the. p. 99. l. 10. to
 vanquish an Apostate, l. 16. means of them the. p. 102. l. 35. that
 when he. p. 108. l. 4. and will attempt. p. 135. l. 2. 3. no such testimo-
 ny concerning any successors.

